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ABSTRACT

Counseling needs of external students at the University of Queensland, Australia, were evaluated in 1980. Attention was directed to respondents' characteristics, students' difficulties and perceived needs for assistance, students' use of Division of External Studies' (DES) services, and students' views of distance learning. Of the 1,589 mailed questionnaires, 1,245 responses were obtained. Most of the respondents were adults who had family, work, and other responsibilities and who were studying to improve their present professional qualifications or to gain new ones. Responses indicated a need for more and earlier pre-enrollment course planning advice and subject information, both in printed form and through personal discussion. Relatively few students who discontinued courses consulted a member of the university regarding this decision. Despite the maturity of DES students, many wanted to improve their study performance. Many respondents indicated interest in increasing personal contacts with DES staff members in order to discuss subject content, students' aspirations, and arrangements for receiving and giving information. In many instances, suggestions were made for changes in the educational practices followed by DES. Appendices specify objectives that could be served by the work of an educational counselor in the DES and illustrate ways in which the work of a counselor might supplement steps already being taken to assist prospective students from the initial stage of seeking information about DES. Information that might be supplied to prospective entrants and to new students is included. (SW)

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UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND

TERTIARY EDUCATION INSTITUTE

COUNSELLING NEEDS OF UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND EXTERNAL STUDENTS, 1980

by

H.W. THIELE

Tertiary Education Institute August 1981

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Bill Thiele,
Director of Counselling Services

1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The University of Queensland has since 1958 provided a Counselling Service on a full time basis for its students. Each year, relatively small numbers of external students avail themselves of the Service, usually during academic vacations. One of the indices of use of the Counselling Services by students is the annual total of interview hours devoted to individual counselling interviews of substantial duration. The annual average for the years 1978-80 was 5,126. Of these, an average of 59 hours was devoted to counselling external students.

Within the Division of External Studies, academic and administrative staff members, like their counterparts elsewhere in the University, give advisory or counselling assistance to students, and there have been periods when a DES academic staff member has acted as a part time counsellor to external students. There has, however, at no time been any counsellor whose sole task it was to help external students to plan their courses, to integrate their activities as students into the remainder of their lives, to study effectively, and to deal with associated difficulties.

The present survey was undertaken to ascertain as far as possible the needs of external students for counselling assistance. It was hoped that, if the survey indicated substantial need for counselling assistance, it would in addition provide suggestions as to ways in which a counsellor might through his or her individual efforts and through cooperation with other DES staff members work most effectively. At the suggestion of some DES staff members the survey also sought attitudes and information in certain areas of particular interest to them.

With the approval of the Director of External Studies and in consultation with the Director and a group of staff members of the Division of External Studies questionnaires were drafted and revised. The External Students Liaison Officer of the University of Queensland Union also provided assistance at

this stage. The Division of External Studies provided the names and addresses of students currently enrolled during the latter part of July 1980, and of students who had cancelled their external enrolments during the year.

The survey was preceded by two items in the Division of External Studies Newsletter: a brief announcement by the Director of External Studies and a statement by the writer. The University of Queensland Union's External Studies Liaison Officer also included a statement in her Newsletter.

Accompanying the questionnaires which were distributed was a letter seeking cooperation and stating the survey to be "a survey of people who are enrolled in the Division of External Studies and of their experience, including their experience of difficulties, while studying as external students". The letter stated that the survey had the approval of the Director of External Studies and assured respondents of their anonymity.

The preliminary notifications given to students concerning the survey and the letter accompanying the questionnaires referred to the potential value of the survey for gaining information as a basis for planning. They avoided any statement that might have suggested that the question of counselling in DES was a matter of contention, and there was no implication that the survey sought exaggerated responses in support of any particular proposed recommendation or action.

The distribution of questionnaires and, where necessary, of reminder letters, was carried out by the Tertiary Education Institute. The initial despatch of questionnaires was carried out from 5 to 7 August 1980. Responses which had been received by the end of November 1980 were prepared for analysis. The coding of responses (including, where necessary, the formulation of categories into which to classify responses) was carried out by Ms L. Raine, a Research Assistant in the Tertiary Education Institute, in consultation with the writer who was temporarily a member of TEDI staff. The data were entered on file and verified by the Prentice Computer Centre.

As well as seeking factual information the questionnaires invited respondents to give opinions in several areas. The potential instability of opinions and their dependence upon a changing background of social, educational, economic and other factors is recognized. In large part generalizations made upon the basis of responses in the survey must therefore be suggestive rather than definitive.

Table 1 sets out the student populations which were sampled, the sizes of samples selected, and the numbers of responses received from the four groups of students concerned:

> currently enrolled students living in Australia, outside the Brisbane metropolitan area
>
> currently enrolled students living in the Brisbane metropolitan area
>
> students living in Australia outside the Brisbane metropolitan area who discontinued their external courses in First Semester 1980
>
> students living in the Brisbane metropolitan area who discontinued their external courses in First Semester 1980.

Questionnaires were mailed to a total of 1,589 students and replies were received from 1,245, an overall response rate of 78 per cent. As Table 1 indicates, the response rate was greatest (84 per cent) in the currently enrolled, non-metropolitan group. Written and spoken comments which were received suggest that the response rates in the two metropolitan groups may reflect in part a tendency for these students to view themselves as being "not really external students".

In each of the four student groups, the ratio of female to male responses received was not significantly different from the ratio in the population surveyed. (Chi-square calculations produced values of p which reached the following significance levels:

currently enrolled non-metropolitan students : 0.90
currently enrolled metropolitan students : 0.20
discontinued non-metropolitan students : 0.70
discontinued metropolitan students : 0.80)

Fifty seven per cent of the currently enrolled respondents were female, as were 61 per cent of those who had discontinued during the year. The difference between these proportions is not significant (Chi-square = 2.16, p = .20). During 1980, 56 per cent of external students were female.[1]

[1] Statistics 1980. University of Queensland, p. 3.

TABLE 1

Populations and Samples Included in the Survey

	Currently enrolled non-metropolitan students, excepting those living overseas (Sampling fraction 1/3)			Currently enrolled metropolitan students (Sampling fraction 3/5)			Non-metropolitan students, excepting those living overseas, who discontinued courses in First Semester 1980			Metropolitan students who discontinued courses in 1980		
	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total
Number on roll	1284	1065	2349	333	205	538	223	158	381	66	38	104
Number selected in sample	417	365	782†	205	117	322	223	158	381	66	38	104
Number responding	356	294	658*	147	71	220*	179	116	297*	43	27	70
Per cent of survey group responding	85	81	84	72	61	68	80	73	78	65	71	67

† An error of one was made in marking off this sample.

* The sex of 12 respondents is unknown. These respondents removed an address label from the questionnaire before returning it, presumably in the interest of anonymity. For this reason, Total responses recorded here exceed Female + Male responses in three categories.

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2 RESPONDENTS' CHARACTERISTICS

As a basis for the consideration of respondents' comments on their needs for information and assistance, this section of the Report presents a brief overview of characteristics of the four groups of external students surveyed.

Length of respondents' experience of external study at the University of Queensland

Table 2 indicates that, among non-metropolitan currently enrolled students, those in their first year of external study at this University formed 28 per cent of the group, while among non-metropolitan discontinued students those who had been in their first year of external enrolment formed 49 per cent of the group. The difference in percentages is significant (Chi-square = 38.46, p = .001). Among metropolitan currently enrolled students those in their first year of external enrolment formed 45 per cent of the group, while among metropolitan discontinued students those in their first year of external enrolment formed 58 per cent of the group. This difference in percentages is not significant (Chi-square = 3.490, p = .10). Non-metropolitan students constitute the bulk of DES enrolments, and the academic vulnerability of those in the first year of external study is evident.

(It should be noted that a small number of metropolitan students, full time or part time, have grounds for enrolment externally in one or more subjects, while also being enrolled internally. In their case, discontinuation of external enrolment may not indicate total discontinuation of enrolment.)

TABLE 2

Respondents' Length Of Experience Of External Study at the University of Queensland

Year of enrolment as an external student	Currently enrolled				Discontinued enrolment		
	Residence area	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total
First	Non-metropolitan	109	72	181	92	50	142
	Metropolitan	63	35	98	25	14	39
Second	Non-metropolitan	52	45	97	35	16	51
	Metropolitan	21	13	34	5	3	8
Third	Non-metropolitan	56	47	103	12	19	31
	Metropolitan	26	6	32	3	5	8
Fourth	Non-metropolitan	44	40	84	17	7	24
	Metropolitan	17	5	22	4	1	5
Fifth or later	Non-metropolitan	91	88	179	20	22	42
	Metropolitan	19	12	31	5	2	7
	Totals	352	292	644	176	114	290
		146	71	217	42	25	67

A later section of this Report will indicate that many students feel the need for relevant information and guidance prior to and at the commencement of external courses. Assuming representativeness of the response groups, Table 2 provides a basis for estimating that there were enrolled in DES at the beginning of 1980 about 1148 students who had enrolled in the Division for the first time in that year, and that about 246 of these students discontinued their enrolments during the period up to the time of the survey. The total group of discontinued

students at the time of the survey numbered 485. It appears therefore that about half of all discontinuations were of students in their first year of study in DES.[1]

Not all students who are enrolled in their first year of external study are at the same time undertaking their first year of study at the tertiary level. Table 3 concerned with the length of respondents' experience at the tertiary level.

TABLE 3

Respondents' Length of Experience of Tertiary Study

Year of enrolment as a tertiary student	Residence area	Currently enrolled			Discontinued enrolment		
		Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total
First	Non-metropolitan	30	23	53	13	8	21
	Metropolitan	14	4	18	3	3	6
Second or later	Non-metropolitan	324	270	594	166	108	274
	Metropolitan	133	67	200	40	24	64
Totals	Non-metropolitan	354	293	647	179	116	295
	Metropolitan	147	71	218	43	27	70

Assuming adequacy of representation in the response groups, there were enrolled in DES at the beginning of 1980 about 271 students who had enrolled at a tertiary institution for the first time. About 35 of these discontinued their enrolments during the period up to the time of the survey. A Chi-square test did not suggest increased incidence of discontinuation of non-metropolitan students in their first year of tertiary study as compared with other non-metropolitan students ($p = .70$).

1 It is known that many who discontinued had tertiary qualifications. In all 505 students had discontinued DES courses in 1980 up to the time of survey. This group includes the 485 surveyed here and 20 living overseas. Degrees were held by 226 of the 505 who discontinued.

Tertiary qualifications held by currently enrolled respondents

In all, about one-third of currently enrolled respondents already held a tertiary qualification. Nine per cent held a subgraduate degree or diploma and 18 per cent a bachelor degree, while a further six per cent held a bachelor degree together with another tertiary qualification. Significantly more males than females were included in the group with tertiary qualifications (Chi-square = 26.26, p = .001).

Ages of respondents

At December 31, 1979 the median age for full time students in the University was 19.8 years. Part time internal students were older, the median being 29.5 years. For part time external students the median age was 30.1 years.[1] The corresponding median age for all non-metropolitan respondents in the survey (currently enrolled and discontinued groups combined) was 30.5 years; and for all metropolitan respondents, 32 years. Few external students are comparable in age with the majority of internal students. Whereas over half of the University's full time students were aged 19 or younger as at December 31, 1979, only two per cent of part time external students were aged 19 or younger at that time.

Courses being undertaken by respondents

From Table 4 it can be seen that the great majority of respondents were enrolled in courses in Arts or Education. The fact that there were comparatively small numbers of respondents in other faculties limited in certain instances inferences which might have been made in later sections of this Report.

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[1] Statistics 1980. University of Queensland. 1981. p. 24.

TABLE 4

Courses Being Undertaken by Respondents

Course	Residence area	Currently enrolled during 1980			Discontinued enrolment during 1980			Totals
		Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total	
B.A.	Non-metropolitan	188	124	312	86	43	129	441
	Metropolitan	81	33	114	28	10	38	152
B.Ed.St.	Non-metropolitan	129	80	209	69	35	104	313
	Metropolitan	49	6	55	6	4	10	65
B.Com.	Non-metropolitan	14	34	48	7	15	22	70
	Metropolitan	2	11	13	3	5	8	21
B.Econ.	Non-metropolitan	4	29	33	1	5	6	39
	Metropolitan	2	9	11	1	2	3	14
LL.B.	Non-metropolitan	8	14	22	5	6	11	33
	Metropolitan	4	5	9	2	4	6	15
P-grad. Misc.	Non-metropolitan	7	7	14	4	8	12	26
	Metropolitan	2	3	5	2	2	4	9
M.Lit.St.	Non-metropolitan	3	2	5	4	1	5	10
	Metropolitan	4	0	4	0	0	0	4
B.A. LL.B.	Non-metropolitan	1	0	1	1	0	1	2
	Metropolitan	0	1	1	0	0	0	1
Other	Non-metropolitan	2	4	6	2	3	5	11
	Metropolitan	3	3	6	1	0	1	7
Totals	Non-metropolitan	356	294	650	179	116	295	945
	Metropolitan	147	71	218	43	27	70	288

Occupations of respondents

Enrolling external students are asked to state their occupations when completing the University's enrolment form (but not asked whether their employment is full time of part time). The occupations recorded by respondents were classified into 36 categories. Four occupational areas accounted for the great majority of respondents, one area alone, teaching (from preschool to the tertiary level), accounting for over 40 per cent of all respondents (See Table 5). Large percentages of female respondents were occupied in home duties. These two occupations together accounted for over three quarters of current non-metropolitan enrolments of female students. Occupational areas not shown in Table 5 contained smaller entries than those in the table, with the exception that one of the occupational categories used in the classification which was designated "Other" contained 128 (from a total of 1,212) entries. This category would have contained unemployed respondents as well as those in a miscellany of occupations.

Membership of University societies and clubs

Involvement in interest groups associated with the University community is rare among external students. Only 42 or six per cent of the currently enrolled non-metropolitan students and 18, or eight per cent of the currently enrolled metropolitan students claimed to be members of University clubs or societies, among which were local University of Queensland societies, and constituent recreational and academic clubs and societies of the University of Queensland Union.

Currently enrolled metropolitan students

A section of the questionnaire for currently enrolled students was addressed solely to those who resided in the metropolis. When their reasons for external enrolment were sought, 35 per cent stated that employment conditions prevented

TABLE 5

Percentages of Each Sample Group Employed in Twelve Occupational Areas

Occupation	Currently enrolled during 1980			Discontinued enrolment during 1980	
	Female		Male	Female	Male
	Non-metrop. per cent (N=351)	Metrop. per cent (N=140)	Non-metrop. per cent (N=291)	Non-metrop. per cent (N=176)	Non-metrop. per cent (N=115)
Teaching	40	23	42	44	40
Home duties	37	43	1	28	0
Armed Services	2	1	15	2	13
Administrative and Clerical	4	9	9	7	9
Banking and Business	2	4	4	3	6
Engineering	0	0	4	0	3
Primary Industry	1	0	3	1	3
Religious work	1	0	2	1	2
Science and Technology	0	1	2	2	1
Student	2	5	0	1	1
Medicine	1	1	1	1	3
Law	1	1	1	0	3

Notes: 1 Percentages are not shown for metropolitan males, whether continuing students or those who discontinued nor for metropolitan females who discontinued. Samples (70, 26 and 43) were too small to allow the calculation of reliable percentages.

2 Minor occupational groups have been excluded hence percentages do not total to 100.

their attendance at internal lectures, and 33 per cent that family commitments prevented lecture attendance. Seven per cent had experienced timetable clashes with internal lectures. Five per cent were studying externally because of physical handicap or illness, and five per cent because of pregnancy. Five per cent were graduates whose occupations made lecture attendance difficult. Transport difficulties, the need to study a subject not available internally and a group of miscellaneous reasons accounted for the remaining 13 per cent of the group.

Twenty nine per cent of the currently enrolled metropolitan group did not visit the University at St. Lucia during First Semester, 1980. Of those who did visit the campus, 41 did so on nine or more occasions and the other 114 on an average of four occasions. The majority of visits were made during the day, Monday to Friday, or at weekends. Only 15 per cent of visits were made in the evening. The 59 respondents who did not visit the University during the semester were in the main prevented from doing so by difficulties associated with work, family commitments or transport. Sixteen had not found it necessary to visit the campus, and only two had refrained from visiting the campus because they felt they did not belong there.

The principal reason given for visiting the campus was to obtain books. Other reasons, in order of popularity, were to see lecturers, to get general information, to attend tutorials, to attend lectures, to meet other students. In the main, respondents reported that their visits to the University enabled them to achieve the purposes for which they had come.

Discontinued respondents' qualifications on initial enrolment as external students

Of respondents who had discontinued external courses during 1980, nine per cent were already graduates of this University at their commencement of external studies and another 64 per cent had come to external study with credit already ~~gained~~

towards a degree at this or another university. Another 22 per cent had commenced on the basis of mature age entry or the Queensland Senior examination, and three per cent under provisions for mature age special entry. Only one per cent had commenced on the basis of entry from Year 12 of secondary schooling.

Discontinued respondents' intentions concerning study

Of respondents who had discontinued their courses, 87 per cent stated that they did not intend to undertake further tertiary study during 1980. Seven per cent stated that they were continuing with part time, and one per cent with full time, in internal study at this University. One per cent stated that they would re-enrol externally in Second Semester. Three per cent stated that they were continuing during 1980 to study externally and two per cent internally, at other tertiary institutions.

Of respondents to a question asking whether they were likely to re-enrol with DES in later years, 71 per cent replied affirmatively and 26 per cent negatively, the remaining three per cent being undecided.

The 75 who had replied negatively gave 82 reasons as to why they would not re-enrol with DES in the future. Thirty five statements indicated the intention to continue studying internally or else at another tertiary institution. Thirteen referred to the difficulty of balancing studies and other commitments; eight to difficulties experienced with the external studies mode; eight to dissatisfaction with some aspect of DES operations; five to students' moving outside Queensland; five to studies being no longer relevant to respondents' needs; four to students' inability to fulfil course requirements; three to lack of interest; and one to ill health.

Those who had replied affirmatively to the question whether they were likely to re-enrol with DES in the future were also asked if they were likely to re-enrol in 1981. Forty seven per cent replied yes, 46 per cent no, and the remainder were uncertain.

The information supplied by discontinued students concerning their intentions indicates that external students' discontinuations do not necessarily imply permanent cessation of tertiary study. Later sections of this Report indicate some of the circumstances which respondents claimed to have affected their studies.

Reasons for studying

Students were asked to indicate from a list of six possible reasons for study the one which best described their own reason for studying. This question was answered by 315 currently enrolled students. Their responses were as follows:

345 (42 per cent) indicated that their principal reason was to improve their present professional qualifications

188 (23 per cent) for intellectual stimulation

173 (21 per cent) to gain new professional qualifications

68 (8 per cent) to gain a better general education

14 (2 per cent) to deepen their understanding of other people

10 (1 per cent) to develop their cultural appreciation

17 (2 per cent) gave a variety of other reasons.

Thus for 63 per cent of this group external study principally served utilitarian purposes concerned with their qualifications. The two reasons gaining the lowest places in order of popularity are of cultural rather than utilitarian importance. The same order of popularity of reasons held within the subgroup of 471 female respondents. For the 344 males the orders of the second and third categories were reversed.

In addition to indicating their main reason for studying, students were invited to indicate any other statements in the list which constituted reasons, though not the main reason for their studying. "For intellectual stimulation" was checked 395 times; "to gain a better general education" 369 times; "to gain new professional qualifications" 196 times;

"to deepen understanding of other people" 191 times; "to improve present qualifications" 180 times, and "to develop cultural appreciation" 152 times.

Any item which had been marked by a respondent as the main reason could not, of course, also receive credit from that respondent as an other item. When both of the above sets of results are considered together, the importance to students of the factors of intellectual stimulation and general education as benefits of external study is clear.

The same question was answered by 367 students who had discontinued their courses during 1980. For this group, the order of popularity of the main reason for study was the same as that for currently enrolled students, the percentages checking the items being 47, 20, 15, 12, one and one. For the female and male subgroups there were only minor differences in the order of popularity of items, the numbers involved in some cases being relatively small.

The question also invited students to set down their own versions of their reasons for studying, and to classify them as main or other. Overall, only two per cent of 1,169 respondents did this. From the 29 respondents involved, 18 different reasons were recorded. It seems that the group of six reasons listed in the question was in the present context adequate to cover the main sources of the external students' motivation to study.

Study workloads

Currently enrolled students were asked whether the average amount of time they spent on their University work during semester was about the same as the DES Handbook or Course Guide would lead them to expect, or more, or less. Table 6 summarises the responses of 833 students who answered this question and a question concerning the number of years during which they had been enrolled as external students.

TABLE 6

Average Weekly Study Load (in comparison with DES Handbook advice) of Students with Varied External Study Experience

Average weekly study load in comparison with DES Handbook suggestion	Number of years as an external student					
	1	2	3	4	5 or more	Totals
Much more	23	10	12	9	11	65
A little more	50	21	24	16	24	135
About the same	72	36	37	30	56	231
A little less	67	30	43	31	60	231
Much less	57	29	16	17	52	171
Totals	269	126	132	103	203	833

The 200 respondents who claimed to do much more or a little more constitute 24 per cent of the whole group; the 231 answering "about the same" constitute 28 per cent, and those who claimed to do much less or a little less, 48 per cent. It seems reasonable to conclude that these percentages hold approximately true for the main body of currently enrolled external students.

Sixteen subanalyses of responses were made according to sex, metropolitan vs non-metropolitan residence, and qualifications of respondents (holding no degree or diploma; holding a subgraduate diploma or certificate; holding a bachelor degree; holding a bachelor degree plus a diploma or other degrees). In all but two of these subanalyses (and the numbers were small in the two), the proportion doing less study than the DES Handbook suggests was greater than the proportion doing more.

In response to a further question, 176 students gave reasons why they studied more than was to be expected. The reasons given fell into the following categories:

Responses in which the demands of the subject are seen as so great as to call for additional study:

- The nature of the subject(s) makes extensive reading necessary (43 responses)
- Coming to terms with the subject content and/or skills is time consuming (35 responses)
- Doing research and writing assignments is time consuming (31 responses)
- The workload is heavy and the credit point values not realistic (12 responses)

Responses in which qualities of the learner are seen as making additional time necessary:

- By choice or of necessity, the students' study patterns make for increased hours of study (14 responses)
- After a period away from study, effective study habits and confidence are not yet established (12 responses)
- The students' study skills or habits are not sufficiently productive (9 responses)
- Additional time is spent in order to have the satisfaction of a job well done, or because of interest (9 responses)

Responses in which the isolation of the external student is seen to result in extra time demands:

- Solving problems is a time consuming process when one works in isolation (11 responses).

Three hundred and fifty nine respondents gave reasons why they studied <u>less</u> than was to be expected. (This was twice the number giving reasons why they studied <u>more</u> than might be expected). Their reasons fell into three broad categories:

Responses in which the reduced time is seen as the result of conflicting demands of other activities:

competing work demands (97 responses)

competing work and family demands (89 responses)

competing family and social/recreational demands (56 responses)

Responses in which the reduced time is seen as the result of qualities possessed by the student:

Positive qualities -

The student achieves satisfactory results with less time spent on study (34 responses)

The student has an academic or a practical background in the subject area(s) (13 responses)

Negative qualities -

The student lacks a consistent study pattern (21 responses)

The student lacks sustained interest and/or motivation (18 responses)

Unforeseen disruptions affect study (20 responses)

The remaining 11 comments fell into nine other types.

Two thirds of the reasons given for doing less study than might be expected concerned the conflicting demands of work, family and related activities. Later sections of this Report consider further the difficulties created for external students by their other commitments.

It is not certain, however, that conflicting demands of work, family and related activities are likely to be the sole factors associated with any tendency for students to do less work than might be expected. Studies of the workloads of internal students in the University of Queensland (Foster and Biggs/Paxton, 1975, 1976) seem to imply a tendency for many to do less work than the semester credit point values associated with their courses would imply (Part A, pp. 9-10; Part B, p. 9; Part C, p. 21). An earlier study (Roe, Isaacs, Biggs and Cais, 1974) had recorded the "cautious conclusion" that students studying first year subjects in First Semester were carrying a heavier workload than that officially required (p. 3).

Students' personal priorities

Respondents were asked to rank in order of importance to them the following items:

social activities
paid employment
friends
interests/pastimes
family
sport
university study
community involvement.

The following comments relate to the three items most frequently ranked first by members of the four respondent subgroups.

Currently enrolled non-metropolitan students:

In this group, family was ranked first by 487 (76 per cent) respondents. Paid employment was ranked first by 82 respondents (13 per cent). Friends was ranked first by 40 respondents (6 per cent). These three items were ranked in the same order by females and by males. (By contrast university study was ranked first by nine respondents, or one per cent.)

Currently enrolled metropolitan students:

Here, family was ranked first by 153 respondents (72 per cent of respondents). Paid employment was ranked first by 26 respondents (12 per cent). These three items were ranked in the same order by the female and male subgroups. (By contrast university study was ranked first by seven respondents, or three per cent.)

Discontinued non-metropolitan students:

In this group, family was ranked first by 136 respondents (47 per cent of respondents). Paid employment was ranked first by 102 respondents (35 per cent). University study was ranked first by 31 respondents (11 per cent). These items were ranked in the same order within the female subgroup. Within the male subgroup the order was: paid employment, family, university study.

Discontinued metropolitan students:

Here, family was ranked first by 38 respondents (54 per cent of respondents). Paid employment was ranked second by 20 respondents (28 per cent). University study was ranked first by five respondents (7 per cent). The small numbers of respondents in the various subcategories here make it unprofitable to comment on differences in the rankings given by females and by males.

On the basis of the above percentages, it might be concluded that university studies are of relatively slight importance to most external students in comparison with other major aspects of life. To some extent, however, this view results from the understandably strong tendency for respondents (between 82 and 89 per cent of respondents in the four subgroups of students) to place family and paid employment in the first two categories, leaving six remaining options to compete for the remaining small numbers of opportunities to be allocated to the first or second priorities.

Having recognized that for many external students family obligations and the need to earn a living must of necessity demand most of their attention, more light can be thrown upon the position of university studies by considering the modal ranking (from one to eight) given to university studies by the four student subgroups. These rankings were:

by currently enrolled non-metropolitan students - fourth
by currently enrolled metropolitan students - third
by discontinued non-metropolitan students - third
by discontinued metropolitan students - third

These rankings confirm the importance to respondents of the studies they undertake. The involvement of most external students in some form of employment can be expected to create difficulties for many in coordinating the activities in which they are involved.

3 STUDENTS' DIFFICULTIES, AND PERCEIVED NEEDS FOR ASSISTANCE

Assistance to students at the time of initial external enrolment

Currently enrolled students were asked to give information about and to comment on six areas in which they might have required assistance at the time of their initial enrolment with DES. The results as summarised in Table 7 suggest that the DES enrolment system functions effectively for a large majority of students but that sizable minorities of students feel in need of more assistance than is now provided in some areas. In Table 7 similar comments sometimes appear in relation to more than one of the aspects of enrolment. The comments have perhaps four main implications:

> Many enrolling external students wish to have more foreknowledge of what it is really like to study certain subjects. In commenting, one respondent suggested the need for "an effective brief and pre-reading course by which to assess work load and through which to prepare for work". Another requested "down to earth information on the subject not handbook jargon". Another wrote, "synopsis of subject content before commencement of study year".
>
> Students' course planning would benefit if they had more preliminary information and advice for the purpose. A respondent wrote, "if possible it would be helpful if DES could indicate subjects which may not be available in future years". Another wrote of the need for "guidance in planning subjects to make up degree; what area to emphasise"; another wrote, "subjects listed were then withdrawn".
>
> Many would like to receive personal guidance in relation to their courses or subjects. Relevant comments are: "counsellors to visit centre and advise on which subjects for majors etc."; "someone available who knows something about the subjects"; "I was ready to give up and met a lecturer in a corridor who gave invaluable help".
>
> Preliminary information on student assessment would be an aid to subject choice. Sample comments are: "DES should <u>always</u> specify the type of assessment e.g. how many assignments and duration of exam. This is important for busy external students to plan ahead."; and "a more detailed description of subjects, particularly assessment workload. Too many subjects state 'Assessment - to be advised in Intro. Outline'."

TABLE 7

Opinions of Currently Enrolled Students Concerning

Enrolment tasks	Respondent sub-groups	Numbers stating - Assistance was adequate	Assistance was not needed	Could have benefited from (more) assistance from DES
Getting course planning advice	Non-metropolitan	231	185	196
	Metropolitan	57	90	56
Getting subject information	Non-metropolitan	330	101	194
	Metropolitan	89	57	59
Obtaining textbooks early enough	Non-metropolitan	275	215	120
	Metropolitan	89	92	19
Getting initial information	Non-metropolitan	411	109	104
	Metropolitan	136	41	24
Deciding on a manageable study load	Non-metropolitan	302	225	95
	Metropolitan	71	99	33
Enrolling by the due date	Non-metropolitan	334	242	35
	Metropolitan	102	95	6

* The total number of currently enrolled respondents was 878

TABLE 7

Assistance at the Time of Their Initial Enrolment*

Comments on types of assistance which would have been helpful
91 comments: 34 - personal guidance in interview or by letter; 25 - advice on subject availability, to allow forward course planning; 21 - guidance in course planning; 4 - advertise course planning assistance, if available; 3 - more detailed descriptions of subjects; 2 - careers material relating to subject choice; 1 - contact with other students' opinions; 1 - greater range of subject offerings.
132 comments: 60 - more detailed course description in handbook, course outlines; 19 - personal guidance; 18 - specific course material (notes, study guides, reading lists, etc.) to be made available to intending students; 9 - nature of assessment in each subject to be stated in handbook; 7 - more information on availability of subjects, for forward course planning; 6 - personal guidance plus information on assessment in handbook; 6 - simplified presentation in handbook; 4 - handbook to be available earlier; 3 - contact with former students' opinions.
74 comments: 24 - textbook lists should be available earlier; 15 - better liaison between DES, Bookshop and Library; 15 - Bookshop should have adequate stock; 5 - update booklists regularly; 5 - shorten despatch time of texts; 4 - include price lists and order forms with booklists; 2 - establish reciprocal borrowing with other universities; 2 - better liaison (as above), and textbook lists should be available earlier; 2 - provide opportunities to buy second-hand books.
66 comments: 20 - need for counsellor, lecturer or someone to talk to; 15 - more detailed advice on forward course planning; 13 - greater detail on subjects in handbook and/or course outline; 9 - more detail on the mechanics of enrolment; 4 - earlier availability of handbook; 3 - simplified handbook; 1 - guidance on study skills; 1 - an orientation course.
48 comments: 15 - more individual advice; 13 - more detailed description of course in handbook; 9 - more detailed description of course assessment in handbook; 4 - contact with former students' opinions of subject; 3 - advice on how to determine study load; 2 - more uniform credit point/workload ratios; 2 - pre-enrolment course outline or background reading.
15 comments: 7 - earlier notification of due date; 5 - improve efficiency and promptness of enrolment procedures; 3 - more assistance with enrolment procedures.

The need for counselling and information services for adult learners generally is now widely recognised. (Ironside and Jacobs, 1977). In Britain the Open University makes use of tutor-counsellors whose assistance to students may be available for some months before the beginning of the academic year (Sewart, 1979). For prospective students, pre-enrolment material of a course-based, formative, self-diagnostic nature is used; tutor-counsellors provide information and advice. Some prospective students may attend relevant local adult educational classes (Nicholson, 1977, pp. 68-9).

Until recently, the development in Australia of such provisions for external students had been slow. Thornton and Mitchell (1978, p. 3), writing in relation to external studies programmes, stated "...with few notable exceptions, the counselling and information function has been an impoverished, depressed and often non-existent element in a system of education which, in Australia at least, has remained one of the most under-developed and under-nourished areas of educational endeavour". But increasingly, Australian tertiary institutions are now providing information packages for prospective external students (particularly those who apply for special consideration for entry as mature age students) and employing specialist staff members to offer advice and counselling to external students and to design programmes to facilitate communication among external students and between students and teaching and ancilliary staff members. Moran and Croker (1980), after three years' experience of pre-enrolment programmes at Deakin University, tentatively conclude that they foster valuable learning relationships.

In 1980 the proportion of DES students new to tertiary study was small, but a much larger proportion was new to external study at this University. A substantial body of the students would have appreciated more assistance at the time of enrolment: course planning advice, subject information, textbook lists and other information and opportunities to discuss their enrolments with a staff member. An educational counsellor could make

contributions to the provision of pre-enrolment information in printed form as well as in individual interviews and to any orientation programme which might be presented.[1]

Difficulties experienced by currently enrolled students

Currently enrolled students were asked to indicate whether, while they had been enrolled externally, they had experienced difficulties in any of nine specified areas, and if so any effects of these on their studies. Table 8 summarises responses to this section.

It seems that two related matters were experienced by sizable fractions of the group as sources of difficulty. These are learning how their work compared with that of other students, and getting timely and effective feedback on their assignment work.[2] Finding suitable subjects to allow the completion of chosen majors and obtaining library books and lecture notes and study guides when needed were reported as difficulties on lesser but still appreciable numbers of occasions. Physical conditions for examinations were also to some extent a matter of concern. Few respondents reported difficulties associated with composing exclusion appeals, presenting cases for deferred or special examinations and obtaining careers advice.

Table 8 shows also the proportions of respondents who were in their first year as DES students and who experienced these difficulties. The results for this group tend to be similar to those of the entire group of currently enrolled students, with three exceptions.

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1 From a study of recent orientation programmes offered to external students at the University of New England, Bowlay (1980) states, "...there are some grounds for belief that if a potential new external student can make it to an orientation programme, his or her chances of early withdrawal are considerably reduced".

2 Similarly, Hore and West (1980) state that the academic problems of mature age entrants at Monash University centre upon inadequate feedback about essays, and their need for information on academic standards and expectations (pp. 144-145).

TABLE 8

Matters Experienced by Currently Enrolled Students as (i) sources of difficulty
(ii) sources of difficulty slightly affecting studies
(iii) sources of difficulty more seriously affecting studies

Item	Non-metropolitan students						Metropolitan students					
	(i)	(ii)	(iii)	Tot.	Total as per cent of sample	Per cent for those in their 1st external year*	(i)	(ii)	(iii)	Tot.	Total as per cent of sample	Per cent for those in their 1st external year*
Arranging to get books from Thatcher Library when I needed them	11	81	27	119	18%	17%	4	18	9	31	14%	9%
Receiving DES notes and study guides when I needed them	16	66	38	120	18%	20%	2	23	12	37	17%	17%
Getting timely and effective feedback on my assignment work	29	132	87	248	38%	27%	9	40	25	74	34%	27%
Finding enough available subjects to complete majors in the discipline of my choice	24	62	70	156	24%	16%	12	21	19	52	24%	12%
Learning how my work compared with that of other students in the same subject	46	151	50	247	38%	36%	15	46	21	82	37%	41%
Having adequate physical conditions (privacy, ventilation, temperature, quiet, lighting) in the exam room	9	38	39	86	13%	7%	7	6	8	21	10%	6%
Composing an appeal against exclusion from my course	3	9	5	17	3%	3%	0	4	3	7	3%	2%
Presenting a case for deferred or special exams	3	5	4	12	2%	2%	1	3	3	7	3%	2%
Getting information and advice about careers for graduates	6	11	1	18	3%	2%	1	4	5	10	5%	3%

* 182 of the 658 non-metropolitan respondents were enrolled for the first time as DES students, while 99 of the 220 metropolitan respondents were so enrolled.

These exceptions are based upon the following significant differences:

> for non-metropolitan students fewer difficulties were experienced by students in the first external year than by those in later years, in relation to:
>
> - getting timely and effective feedback on assignment work (Chi-square test, $p = .001$)
> - finding suitable subjects to allow the completion of majors (Chi-square test, $p = .01$)
> - having adequate physical conditions in the exam room (Chi-square test, $p = .01$)
>
> for metropolitan students fewer difficulties were experienced by students in the first external year than by those in later years, in relation to:
>
> - finding suitable subjects to allow the completion of majors (Chi-square test, $p = .001$).

It is understandable that students who have had lengthy experience of studying at a distance would more frequently report such difficulties than those whose period of external study has been limited to little more than one semester.

The five sources of difficulty most frequently noted by students essentially concern educational practice or service delivery rather than areas in which some counselling activity might usefully be taken, though such sources of difficulty may provoke the need for psychological support for external students. Nicholson (1977, p. 64), for example, claims that anxiety may adversely affect the performance of strongly motivated students if they are unable to learn how their work compares with that of others.

Respondents were asked to indicate action that DES might take to alleviate their difficulties. The suggestions made by continuing students concerning the six items most frequently experienced as difficulties were:

1. Learning how work compared with that of other students

   - Indicate class results to students in terms of grades, or by means of graphs or written reports (52 comments)
   - Publish sample essays (29 comments)
   - Indicate progress in written comments, increase the volume of comments (15 comments)
   - Grade assignments (10 comments)

2. Getting timely and effective feedback of assignment work

   - Return assignments more promptly, or within set time limits (85 comments)
   - Increase the amount of feedback on assignments (21 comments)
   - Increase the number of markers of assignments (16 comments)
   - Provide more positive feedback (15 comments)
   - Return assignments promptly and improve the feedback (9 comments)

3. Finding enough subjects to complete majors in chosen disciplines

   - Provide a greater range of subjects (90 comments)
   - Extend or maintain the availability of subjects (16 comments)
   - Offer more subjects at advanced levels (8 comments)

4. Receiving DES notes and study guides when needed

   - Issue notes and study guides earlier and/or in a single mailing (28 comments)
   - Improve the efficiency of the present mailing schedules (20 comments)
   - Mail notes and study guides well before due dates for assignments (12 comments)

5. Arranging to get books from the Thatcher Library when needed

   - Provide more copies of texts and other recommended material in demand (26 comments)

6. Having adequate physical conditions in examinations

   - Reduce noise levels (usually in high school settings) (20 comments)

Students who had discontinued their courses were asked to give consideration to three of the same items. The response rates (from 367 students) indicating difficulty in these areas were:

Arranging to get books from the Thatcher Library when needed (19 per cent)

Receiving DES notes and study guides when needed (19 per cent)

Getting timely and effective feedback on assignment work (20 per cent)

Their comments were few in number though 15 commented on the need to issue notes and study guides earlier and/or in a single mailing, and nine commented on the need to return assignments promptly, or within set time limits.

In addition to the comments recorded above, a variety of other comments was received. Because of differences in individual circumstances, no single category into which the responses fell contained more than a handful of responses. Some of the comments conveyed emotional reactions to perceived sources of frustration.

Perceived reasons for discontinuation of courses and partial withdrawal from enrolment

Persons who had discontinued their enrolments during the year were asked to make use of a suggested list of reasons to indicate the main reason for their decision and, where applicable, any supporting reason or reasons. The results are set down in Table 9. The importance of work and family commitments in prompting students to discontinue their enrolments is clear from

TABLE 9

Discontinued Students : Reason for Discontinuation

Possible reasons for discontinuation	Frequency of designation as the main reason for discontinuation			Rank (up to 4)	Frequency of designation as an other reason for discontinuation			Rank (up to 6)
	Female	Male	Total		Female	Male	Total	
Ill health forced me to stop studying	19	2	21	4	17	3	20	
Work commitments had to take precedence over study	46	61	107	1	54	33	87	2
Family commitments had to take precedence over study	50	11	61	2	62	33	95	1
Unexpected events caused major disruptions to study	30	13	43	3	50	30	80	3
The nature of the subject(s) was different from what I had anticipated	6	1	7		14	6	20	
The subject(s) did not fulfil my needs	5	6	11		13	4	17	
The subject(s) was/were more difficult than I had anticipated	1	5	6		16	7	23	
The University had not provided sufficient preliminary information about the subject(s)	1	0	1		13	4	17	
The University had not provided sufficient preliminary information about external study conditions	0	0	0		8	3	11	
I experienced too many frustrations in communication with the University	0	0	1		6	6	12	
D.E.S.	0	0	0		4	1	5	
my lecturer(s	0	0	0		5	4	9	
I did not make a sufficient effort	4	1	5		34	23	57	6
I had difficulties associated with my living conditions	2	2	4		21	12	33	
I lacked support from my family	0	0	0		11	1	12	
my spouse/partner	0	0	0		21	4	25	
my friends	0	0	0		4	2	6	
Personal problems interfered with my study	6	3	9		31	13	44	
There was no local tutorial in the subject(s)	0	0	0		24	18	42	
I found isolation from lecturers and other students a major difficulty	3	1	4		58	21	79	4
I fell behind with the work and felt I would not be able to catch up	4	0	4		53	26	79	4
I felt a lack of support from								
the University	0	0	0		3	2	5	
D.E.S.	0	0	0		2	2	4	
my lecturer(s)	1	1	2		3	4	7	
Other					31	26	57	

Note: 371 main reasons were nominated by 367 respondents. A small number of respondents nominated two main reasons.

the frequency of their designation as main reasons but also from the frequency with which they were designated as other reasons. Males gave work commitments as their main reason for discontinuation more frequently than females (Chi-square = 20.20; p = .001), while females gave family commitments more frequently than males (Chi-square = 13.74; p = .01). The effects of unexpected events were also given on an appreciable number of occasions as a main reason for discontinuation, and also as a supporting reason. The difference between the frequencies of responses for females and males was in this case not significant (Chi-square = 1.637; p = .30). Ill health was the fourth main reason for discontinuation but was not often given as a supporting reason. Females gave ill health as a main reason more frequently than males (Chi-square = 8.22; p = .01). The effects of isolation from lecturers and other students, and of falling behind with studies can be seen in the frequencies with which these are given as supporting reasons. The lack of local tutorials could be considered as a further aspect of isolation.

It is notable that frustrations in communication with the University, with DES and with lecturers were infrequently claimed to have been main reasons for discontinuation. So, too, were felt lack of support from the University, DES and lecturers. Personal problems were seldom given as a main reason for discontinuation, though they were a little more often given as a supporting reason.

Respondents volunteered a total of 57 additional other reasons to support discontinuation. These were classified into 15 categories principally related to students' changes in their study plans and difficulties with the external mode.

Of 658 currently enrolled non-metropolitan students, 204 (31 per cent) had withdrawn from a subject or refrained from sitting for an examination during the year. Among the 220 currently enrolled metropolitan students the corresponding number was 71 (32 per cent). Assuming adequacy of representation in

TABLE 10

Currently Enrolled Students : Reasons for Partial Withdrawal

Possible reasons for withdrawal	Currently enrolled students : reasons given for partial withdrawal			
	Main Reason	Rank (up to 3)	Other Reasons	Rank (up to 5)
I found I had undertaken more study than I could cope with	48	3	77	2
The nature of the course was different from what I had anticipated	11		15	
Other commitments (e.g., to work or family) had to take precedence over study	107	1	100	1
Unexpected events caused major disruptions to study	52	2	75	3
I experienced too many frustrations in communication with the University	2		13	
I experienced too many frustrations in communication with D.E.S.	2		4	
I found the isolation from lecturers and other students a major difficulty.	5		43	5
I withdrew when I found there was no local tutorial in the subject	0		9	
I fell behind with the work and felt I would not be able to catch up	10		61	4
I had enrolled in order to find out what the subject was like rather than because I felt committed to it	1		9	
Other reasons			23	

the respondent samples it would seem that totals of about 728 non-metropolitan and 173 metropolitan DES students took such action during the year.

The students were asked to make use of a suggestion list to indicate the main reason for their action, and any other reason or reasons. The results for the 238 students who answered this question are summarised in Table 10, which also indicates the importance of work and family commitments. Unexpected events and undertaking too much study also frequently led to withdrawals, and the adverse effects of falling behind in study and of isolation are also suggested. Again, frustrations in communication with DES and with the University were infrequently claimed to be main reasons for discontinuation.

McSweeney (1972) had reported that pressure of vocational duties stood out clearly as the principal reason for withdrawals of external students from enrolment at this University. Other reasons frequently given in his survey were: amount of work involved in the subject; change of place of work or occupation; distractions preventing serious study; domestic reasons (marriage, childbirth, etc.); and ill health on the part of the student or another. There are clear similarities between these and the present findings. McSweeney also found little attribution of blame to the University as a cause of withdrawal, although his survey, like the present one, found a small number of respondents who felt bitter about errors and delays on the part of the University or perceived inadequacies in educational practice.

Discontinued students were asked to indicate those (if any) of a variety of people with whom they had discussed their decision to discontinue. Table 11 shows that they tended to discuss the question with those they met most frequently in everyday life, but not often with someone associated with DES. This suggests an area in which DES assistance might be extended.

TABLE 11

Sources of Assistance in Discussing Discontinuation

Source of Assistance	Frequency of discussion	
	Non-metropolitan students	Metropolitan students
Spouse, partner	154	35
Family	58	14
Friends	73	17
Other students	23	3
Lecturer(s)	13	3
Someone else at University	11	2
Someone else at DES	9	2
No one	83	22
Other	20	6

Persons who had discontinued their courses were asked to rate the effectiveness of their learning while they had been enrolled. Of 313 who replied to this question, a larger proportion of those who had been in their first year of external study than of those in later years judged the quality of their study to have been ineffective rather than effective (Chi-square = 5.56; p = .02). Table 12 provides the basic data for this statement.

TABLE 12

Discontinued Students : Judged Effectiveness of Learning

Judged effectiveness of learning	Length of experience of external study	
	First year	Later years
Very effective or fairly effective	79	106
Very ineffective or fairly ineffective	72	56

Though it is distinctly likely that students studying externally at the University of Queensland for the first time did indeed tend to study less effectively than those with lengthier experience, it is relevant that they had had a shorter period in which to judge the effectiveness of their learning.

Overall, 41 per cent of the 313 respondents were negative in their judgment of their learning effectiveness. Counselling assistance aimed at helping students to improve the effectiveness of their learning can have the secondary value of enabling them to deal more effectively with extrinsic factors which contribute to many discontinuations.

Discontinuations among students who may have substantial family and work pressures to cope with do not necessarily indicate permanent separations from education, and discontinuations and partial withdrawals among external students frequently illustrate the fact that progress in formal education cannot be expected to occur at the expense of other important aspects of students' lives.

The students who had discontinued their courses were asked how likely they had thought it was that they would finish a degree. Of 362 who responded to the question, 49 per cent indicated that it was very likely, 34 per cent likely and seven per cent doubtful, while nine per cent stated that they had not in fact intended to finish a degree.

Students' satisfaction with aspects of their study performance

Currently enrolled students were asked to indicate whether they were satisfied with, or needed to improve, eighteen aspects of their study. Aspects which were said to need improvement by at least half of the respondents in either of the subgroups, non-metropolitan students and metropolitan students, are listed below:

	Non-metropolitan students (per cent)	Metropolitan students (per cent)
Establishing a regular routine of study	69	75
Balancing work demands with those of being a student	66	63
Getting started on study (getting down to study)	65	76
Revising actively	57	63
Balancing family or domestic responsibilities with study responsibilities	57	58
Doing effective study reading	57	57
Judging how much or how widely to read in a given subject	57	56
Concentrating when studying	41	50

One might expect differences between views about their study performance held by students in their first year of tertiary enrolment and the views of more mature students. The number of respondents in their first year (53 non-metropolitan students and 18 metropolitan students) was, however, too small for percentages to be dependable.

The remaining ten items on the list were said to need improvement by proportions of non-metropolitan respondents ranging from 47 per cent to 23 per cent in the following order: preparing for examinations; combining social or recreational activities and study commitments; persistence; writing adequate assignments; meeting deadlines for assignments; developing habits of independent study; making notes; studying for understanding; maintaining interest in subjects; getting used to the level of difficulty of University work. For the smaller group of metropolitan students, the order was not markedly different.

Four of the aspects of study performance most frequently judged by respondents to be in need of improvement call for time management skills. These are important for all students, and especially for those who during the academic year also meet other unavoidable commitments. Two other items shown to be important relate to reading techniques. Student counsellors working with internal students are accustomed to assisting them to improve their study performance in these and other areas. Such counselling typically reveals the importance of motivation to study, and counsellors are accustomed to looking for and assisting their clients to deal with those client attributes that are holding them back from studying. Although students are sometimes not aware of or have forgotten principles of learning which can usefully be applied in university study, merely recommending study principles for them to follow does not frequently bring improvement.[1] The individual interviews and

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1 Main (1980) questions the view that successful students are more likely than unsuccessful students to act in accordance with learning principles established in experimental psychology. He suggests instead that successful students tend to choose individual methods that work for them whether or not they are textbook methods.

group discussions which provide the setting for study skills counselling with internal students would be available to a DES counsellor only during limited periods in the year. At other times the communication necessary in dealing with such topics might be by the use of printed material supplemented by audiotape or telephone communication.

Adverse effects of certain factors on students' performance

Currently enrolled students were, in addition, asked if during 1980 their studies had been adversely affected by any of seven specified factors. Table 13 summarises the responses.

The contents of this table throw light upon external students' perceptions of some of the stresses to which they are subjected. The estimated numbers of currently enrolled students experiencing these sources of stress and perceiving them as adversely affecting their studies are large. Estimates are always subject to sampling errors, but the sample of currently enrolled students included in the survey (1,104) was relatively large. The 84 per cent response rate from the sample of non-metropolitan students was substantial, and though the response rate for metropolitan students (68 per cent) was smaller, the estimates are likely to be reasonable guides.

It is unfortunate that there is no available index of the extent of the adverse effects upon students' studies as results of these factors. Respondents perceived adverse effects, however, and at least some instances (for example, change of residence and allocating time to a subject and ultimately withdrawing from enrolment in it) can readily be recognized as sources of adverse effects.

Counselling can be effective in counteracting some of the factors: for example, anxiety over examinations, fear of failing and lack of confidence in one's own level of ability. Direct interpersonal communication is an indispensable component

TABLE 13

Adverse Effect on Studies Resulting from Certain Difficulties

Factors which might adversely affect studies	Percentages of currently enrolled respondents reporting adverse effects on their study in consequency of certain factors				Estimated numbers of the 2887 students enrolled in DES at the time of survey who would claim adverse effects on their studies.
	Non-metropolitan respondents		Metropolitan respondents		
	In their first external year	In later years	In their first external year	In later years	
Anxiety over examinations	21	20	24	23	604
Fear of failing	20	17	23	20	525
Interruptions to study caused by change of residence	26	21	21	13	621
Other living arrangement difficulties	30	24	18	20	704
Concern about the length of a part time course	15	12	16	13	378
Coming to a decision whether to withdraw from a subject or subjects	25	19	27	23	614
Lack of confidence about own level of ability	35	21	28	26	727

Note: Respondents may have named more than one factor, so percentages will not total 100.

of such counselling, and the use of the telephone or of audiotapes could not entirely compensate for the lack of it. In part, advice about techniques of preparing for and taking examinations could help, and so too could the provision of an increased amount of preliminary information about the nature of courses and assignments.

Internal students frequently consult counsellors before deciding whether to discontinue subjects or courses; there are frequently course planning and administrative implications of such decisions. The ability to telephone a counsellor concerning such matters could be a benefit for external students.

4 STUDENTS' USE OF DES SERVICES

Currently enrolled students' participation in certain DES activities, and suggestions for improving the activities

In order to assess students' opinions concerning some of the initiatives taken by DES to overcome teaching-learning problems, currently enrolled respondents were asked whether they had had experience of tutorials, study schools, weekend seminars and lecturer visits. They were asked to state how helpful they had found these to be in extending their personal contact with University staff and/or students and in addition to indicate whether these were relevant to their present needs and how convenient it was to attend on such occasions. Finally, those who judged activities as only "slightly helpful" or "not helpful" were asked for their opinions as to how such occasions could be made more helpful.

The responses, as categorised, are set down in Table 14. Some of the frequencies shown in the table are so small that one might question the value of presenting them. On the other hand, the numbers of respondents critical of the Townsville and Rockhampton Study Schools, for example, were very small, and it is to be expected that the frequencies of their comments would also be small. It is likely, however, that the opinions given have been thoughtfully formed, and have some stability. All who commented had had adequate experience to allow them to evaluate study schools and the like against the background of their needs and of the prevailing practices of DES. The numbers of first year students included in the groups are so small as to make separate analysis of their opinions unprofitable.

Table 14 indicates that the activities concerned were well received by those who experienced them. They were judged to have been very helpful or slightly helpful by percentages of participants in the activities ranging upwards from 86 per cent.

TABLE 14

Students' Reactions

Nature of activity	Respondent groups*	Opinions of these activities held by respondents who had experienced them			Not relevant to students' present needs	Not now convenient to attend	Total comments
		Very helpful	Slightly helpful	Not helpful			
Local tutorials	Non-metropolitan	130	79	26	61	198	40 36 16 11 9 8
	Metropolitan	17	7	3	37	55	7 3
DES Study School at St.Lucia	Non-metropolitan	161	51	3	36	276	39 33 16 12 9 8
	Metropolitan	71	18	3	20	58	5 3 1
Weekend Seminar at St.Lucia	Non-metropolitan	61	25	3	51	309	9 6 5 3 2
	Metropolitan	41	17	3	26	52	2 1
T'ville Study School	Non-metropolitan	29	13	1	120	229	4 3 1 1 1
	Metropolitan	1	0	0	75	18	1 1
R'pton Study School	Non-metropolitan	13	5	3	120	239	2 1 1
	Metropolitan	0	0	0	75	18	1
Local visit by lecturer	Non-metropolitan	85	44	9	80	140	24 7 7 6 6
	Metropolitan	10	2	0	61	16	5 2 1 1

* Total numbers of respondents were: Non-metropolitan 658
Metropolitan 220

TABLE 14

to Teaching-Learning Activities

	Comments
	Comments (by those who judged activities as "slightly helpful" or "Not helpful") on ways in which activities could have been made more helpful.
1	Tutor was deficient in knowledge, preparation or teaching ability
2	Tutorials would have been helpful but are not available in my location
3	Increase the frequency of tutorials
4	Combination of (1) and (6)
5	Organisational problems, e.g. tutorial session devoted to two or more subjects; cancelled tutorials and tutor absences
6	Tutorials were of limited value to me
7	Tutorial should be more closely related to the lecture course; more contact between lecturer and tutor
8	Too few participants in tutorial
1	Smaller class size desirable
2	Need for advance information on school programme
3	Need for more individual consultation time with lecturers and tutors
4	Organisational problems (e.g. allocation of time to subjects; time of presentation during semester)
5	Resulting benefit was of limited value
6	Improve quality of teaching, especially by concentrating on important areas
7	Lectures should concentrate more on course content
8	Need for more personal interviews and small group work rather than lectures
9	Need for more lectures rather than discussions or tutorials
1	Improve the quality of lecturer input
2	Should be more closely related to the subject matter of the course
3	Organise in advance so that students can prepare their contributions
4	Increase the frequency of seminars
5	Preference for different timetabling
6	Lectures should cover more subjects
7	Have fewer subjects and students for each lecturer
1	Need for improvement in lecturing approach
2	Need for improvements in lecture content
3	Need for lectures on a wider range of subjects
4	Relate topics to core sections of courses
5	Need for advance information on school programme
6	Need for early notification (as well as advance information)
7	Increase the frequency of schools
1	Need for lectures on a wider range of subjects
2	Need for improvement in lecturing approach
3	Need for improvement in lecture content
4	Increase the frequency of schools
1	Local visit by lecturer would be helpful but has not been made to date
2	Need for adequate notification for or timing of visit
3	Consult students in advance so that both lecturer and student can prepare
4	Make lecturer's contribution more relevant to the work of the course
5	Increase the frequency of visits
6	Need to extend duration of visit
7	Need for more personal contact
8	Combination of (2) and (6)
9	Preference for a discussion group

This conclusion is supported by other data in Table 14. The percentages of non-metropolitan students regarding local tutorials, the DES Study School at St. Lucia, the weekend seminar at St. Lucia and local visits by lecturers as not relevant to their needs were only 9, 5, 8 and 12. Opinions as to activities at Townsville and Rockhampton must, of course, be affected by the geographical distribution of respondents. Twelve per cent regarded local visits by lecturers as not relevant to their needs.

In some instances more than one comment was given by respondents who had typified an activity which they had experienced as being slightly helpful or not helpful, when suggesting ways in which the activity could have been made more helpful. Though it may not be immediately apparent from the titles of the response categories, an overall impression derivable from the comments made in relation to lectures and tutorials is that participants appreciate it if lectures and tutorials deal explicitly with sections of their subjects which they find difficult, or which are of central importance to the structure of the subjects.

Over a third of the group invited to comment found tutors deficient in knowledge, preparation or teaching ability. Given the variety of subjects studied by external students, the provision of adequate tutorials in University Centres can hardly fail to be difficult. If it were sought, a counsellor's contribution to this situation might be directed at aiding some tutors to establish more effective interaction with students. But presumably other educational devices such as videotaped mini-lectures for discussion, telephone contact with lecturers and telephone contacts between tutors and students are desirable as well.

The recurrent suggestions for increase in the frequency of tutorials, seminars and lecturer visits, a suggestion for smaller class sizes at the Study School at St. Lucia and suggestions for opportunities for more individual discussion with lecturers and tutors all indicate a prevailing interest in increasing personal contacts between students and teaching staff.

Currently enrolled respondents' contact with lecturers

Currently enrolled students were asked whether they had tried during 1980 to contact a lecturer or lecturers, and if so by what means. Half of the non-metropolitan students and 65 per cent of the metropolitan students who answered this question had tried to contact lecturers. Those who had done so were geographically distributed in the following way. (The corresponding percentages of the enrolments in the geographical areas are shown in brackets.)

Metropolitan students	:	140	(65%)
Non-metropolitan but mailing addresses in Brisbane	:	9	(56%)
Moreton	:	75	(49%)
Stanthorpe-Darling Downs	:	28	(49%)
Far West	:	13	(57%)
Wide Bay and hinterland	:	46	(49%)
Central Queensland	:	47	(46%)
Far North West	:	5	(38%)
Far North (coastal)	:	37	(39%)
Northern Territory	:	11	(55%)
In other Australian States	:	50	(54%)

The percentages for the various geographical areas are relatively uniform. Extrapolating to the whole currently enrolled population in 1980 suggests that about 1,180 of the 2,349 non-metropolitan and 352 of the 538 metropolitan students tried to contact a lecturer during 1980 up to the time of survey.

Responses to a question on the means used in making contact suggest that in the whole currently enrolled population in 1980 the usage of different forms of contact was approximately of the following order:

	Non-metropolitan	Metropolitan
Letter	680	73
Telephone call to DES	500	214
Telephone call to lecturer's home	206	91
Ansafone	66	8
Personal visit	228	131
Telegram	0	0
Other	40	15
Totals	1720	532

The fact that the estimates of the totals exceed the numbers of students who sought contact with lecturers indicates that numbers of respondents made use of more than one method of contacting lecturers.

These are indications of a steady volume of communication directed toward lecturers. The total volume in 1980 must have been greater still than reported here, for three reasons:

Respondents were not asked to indicate the fact if they used any method of communication more than once during the year.

The survey was conducted part-way through the year. Returns were received between early August and late November.

The 485 students who discontinued their courses during the year were not asked the same question because their periods of enrolment in DES varied, some being very short. This made it impossible to estimate population incidences for the year for this group.

Elsewhere in this Report are indications that many students would appreciate more opportunities for personal contact with lecturers and tutors. It is likely that, if additional provision for students to contact staff were made and publicised, students

would react positively to the opportunities offered. It seems reasonable to assume that contact with a counsellor would be actively sought.

Currently enrolled students were asked how often they had been successful in contacting lecturers during their whole period of enrolment, and how helpful the contacts had been. Table 15 and 16 show high percentages reporting success in making the contacts, and helpfulness of contacts. Separate tallies for students in their first year of tertiary study are included. Although the numbers are small, the suggestion is that the DES system is successful in encouraging these students to make contact with lecturers, and in providing help when contact has been made.

TABLE 15

Success in Contacting Lecturers During Whole Period of External Enrolment

Frequency of success in contacting lecturer(s)	Non-metropolitan students			Metropolitan students		
	In first year of tertiary study in 1980	In later years of tertiary study	Totals	In first year of tertiary study in 1980	In later years of tertiary study	Totals
Usually	21	316	337	11	115	126
Occasionally	4	56	60	1	26	27
Never	2	15	17	2	8	10
Not applicable	17	169	186	4	36	40
	64	556	600	18	185	203

TABLE 16

Helpfulness of Contact with Lecturer(s)
During Whole Period of External Enrolment

Degree of helpfulness of contact with lecturer(s)	Non-metropolitan students			Metropolitan students		
	In first year of tertiary study in 1980	In later years of tertiary study	Totals	In first year of tertiary study in 1980	In later years of tertiary study	Totals
Very helpful	14	229	243	7	93	100
Fairly helpful	10	139	149	5	50	55
Not helpful	2	15	17	1	2	3
Not applicable	13	141	154	1	37	38
	39	524	563	14	182	196

Though the survey did not seek information about student contact with members of the administrative staff of the Division it is known that they deal annually with a large volume of written, telephone and personal inquiries.

5 DISTANCE LEARNING - STUDENTS' VIEWS

Liked aspects of external studies

All students were asked to consider their needs and preferences in relation to studying and learning and to list aspects of external study that they liked. On the basis of a preliminary consideration of the responses received from 1,245 currently enrolled or discontinued students categories were formulated for their classification. Twenty eight initial categories were later grouped under eight principal headings, each of which drew together subcategories with related contents.

1 Flexibility in balancing study and other commitments

The most frequently occurring favourable comment about studying externally related to the flexibility it allowed in balancing study and other commitments. The respondents concerned clearly considered that the freedom to organise one's own study time was a positive aspect of being an external student. Typical comments are: "Study commitments can be tailored to suit work, family and social requirements to a reasonable extent" and "I can choose the most suitable times for study and slot it in to suit my own timetable". There were 555 such comments from the 1,245 respondents.

Among currently enrolled respondents 49 per cent of those outside Brisbane and 56 per cent of those in the metropolis made this comment. Among discontinued students, 30 per cent of those outside Brisbane and 36 per cent of those in the metropolis made the same comment.

2 Quality and helpfulness of DES methods and resources

The next most popular reason, given 436 times, for liking external study related to the quality or helpfulness of DES methods and responses. The comprehensive and helpful nature of the lecture notes received most frequent mention, followed by the efficiency shown in the Thatcher Library. Typical comments were: "The notes received from lecturers have been excellent - probably much better than any I would take at lectures. They will be a valuable permanent asset"; "friendliness of Thatcher staff. Their encouragement keeps me going"; "regular assignments [subject] that are relevant and a good learning experience".

Among currently enrolled students 41 per cent of those outside Brisbane and 35 per cent in the metropolis made such a comment. Among discontinued students, the corresponding percentages were 23 and 29.

3 Opportunities for individuality in study approach

There were 366 respondents who made comments indicating their appreciation of the opportunities for individuality in study approach which are inherent in external study. Advantage was principally seen in the freedom to work at one's own pace as distinct from that of a class, and secondly in the greater freedom to concentrate on one's own areas of interest and to plan how best to do this. Examples of the comments which were made are: "can read notes and think about things in a quieter frame of mind than in a lecture room - can skim quickly over the familiar to think on less familiar or more interesting"; "I can proceed at my own pace"; "one is not hampered by other people who do not progress as fast"; "can concentrate on areas of special interest in a subject...course guide allows forward planning of time".

Among currently enrolled students 40 per cent of students outside Brisbane and 21 per cent of metropolitan students made such a comment. Among discontinued students the corresponding percentages were 16 and 14.

The comments in the remaining categories occurred with markedly lower frequencies than the first three.

4 Avoiding disliked aspects of internal study

A total of 152 respondents saw as a positive quality of external study the opportunities it gave to avoid disliked aspects of internal study. The most popular comment here concerned the advantage of not having to travel to attend lectures, while the next expressed a dislike of the lecture mode. Typical comments were: "it eliminates the hassle and time involved in attending Uni personally e.g. going out, parking car, getting baby sitters, finding time etc."; "no boring lectures to attend"; "not having to waste time in tutorials or seminars".

5 Studying independently

One hundred and fifty respondents saw it as a positive aspect of external study that it enabled them to study independently. Most comments referred to the personal satisfaction of being an independent learner, implying achieving through one's own efforts and meeting in a self-reliant way the challenges of study. The reduction of pressure and competition was another aspect which drew comment. Both aspects are suggested in the comment, "the development of a self-discipline in spending so many hours studying. The absence of competition which for full time students may result in added pressure which might take the joy out of learning".

6 The value of external study against a background of limited options

One hundred and twenty five respondents made comments constituting essentially a recognition that external study had some value in the light of the limitations on their options. The largest sub group of comments recognised that external study allowed the opportunity to study, or continuity of study, despite pressing work and family commitments or distance from the University. This is exemplified in "could not study except as external student because of family commitment and distance so very grateful there is an external study section" and "the opportunity

to study continuing despite being over 1,000 miles away from home-Uni". Next in size was a group of somewhat grudging compliments conveying no particular preference for external studies but a recognition of their convenience, for example, "I don't like anything about it but living so far from St. Lucia one has no choice".

7 Personal fulfilment or intellectual stimulation of studying

Eighty five comments essentially concerned these positive aspects of being a student. References were to intellectual stimulation, broadening horizons, becoming a more interesting person. Examples are: "takes my mind off the mundane aspects of housekeeping, improves my general outlook to life, increases my circle of friends"; "sense of fulfilment at doing tertiary studies"; "an 'escape' time".

8 Appreciation of personalised aspects of DES Service

Finally, 83 respondents commented on aspects of the prompt personal attention (as distinct from quality of service) they received from DES, or by personal contacts made at study schools, etc. Typical comments are: "being considered as an individual by the various lecturers"; "I liked the fact that DES does try to help as much as possible".

Given that external students typically have many commitments to meet, it is logical that a large proportion of their positive comments would convey appreciation of the way in which distance learning lends itself to inclusion in their already busy lives, while allowing them scope for individuality in approach. These benefits can be experienced only if the quality of the service provided is high, and many positive comments were made on the quality of the work of DES.

Disliked aspects of external studies

All students were in a similar manner asked to list things they disliked about external study. Responses received were classified into 52 categories which were later grouped under six principal headings.

1 Aspects of isolation

From the 1,245 respondents, 658 comments which were received related to disliked aspects of isolation, principally the disadvantages of intellectual isolation from the academic community - the inability to discuss matters with lecturers and with other students, and the inefficiencies resulting from communication over a distance, with its lack of opportunity for immediate conversational feedback and consequent dislocations of study activities. Typical comments were: "there are times when I'd just love to be able to talk a question or idea out with someone who understands"; "miss the wonderful, idyllic, Camelot environs of University of Queensland"; "no chance to discuss ideas, conflicts, emotions about an issue with people/lecturer/ fellow students involved in the course. I find it very impersonal"; "difficulties and time lost in trying to get a solution when you have a problem which impedes further study"; "being unable to contact lecturers, difficulty especially with distances, urgent messages by phone, lecturers not there...".

Of currently enrolled respondents, 56 per cent of those outside Brisbane and 54 per cent of those in the metropolis made such a comment. The corresponding percentages for discontinued students were 47 and 49.

The number of adverse comments about effects of isolation was well over twice as many as the number of adverse comments occurring in the second largest category, difficulties with study.

(A minor piece of evidence supporting the notion of students' appreciation of the company of other students came to light during an examination of the names and addresses of the population of 2,349 currently enrolled non-metropolitan students. There were 62 instances where two students of the same surname had identical postal addresses. Thus at least six per cent of the population consisted of pairs of students. There may have been in addition other pairs of students of different surnames but identical addresses.)

2 Study difficulties

Two hundred and sixty one comments concerned the particular study difficulties experienced by respondents. Some of these difficulties result from conflicting demands, as exemplified in, "the thing I dislike most is not being able to do things to a standard I like to set myself. Everything from reading, assignments to exams is a rush job as time is always against you". Again, "family pressures, friends etc. don't understand the need to study. In a Uni atmosphere it's much easier to find time". The other main aspect of study difficulties concerned the unusual demands of distance learning for self discipline and self motivation. For some, the ladk of structured learning situations, peer group pressure and informal contacts with other students made it more difficult to establish and maintain study routines. Typical comments are: "no 'push' motivation to study as from compulsory attendance at tuts"; "it is very easy to fall behind and lose touch with the subject thinking patterns for long periods of time. External studies has been more of an endurance test than an intellectually stimulating experience. I am easily distracted by other pressures but as I'm fairly good at endurance I have often battled through to a last minute pass. The satisfaction is in the final achievement but not in the process of learning - not very satisfactory at all". (A proportion of these respondents indicated that they felt that independent learning, despite its

difficulties, was a positive and rewarding aspect of external study.)

3 Teaching methods

Two hundred and thirty four respondents criticised such specific aspects of teaching as the presentation of courses, lecture notes and guides (50 comments), the nature of assignment questions (34 comments), the feedback of information about assignments (32 comments), the degree of direction or structure in materials (30 comments), and the provision of information about standards (30 comments). Some relevant comments are: "long tedious lecture notes written in complicated English"; "ambiguous nature of assignment topics"; "very few comments written on some assignments"; "lecturers who persist in non-constructive criticism"; "some difficulty in gaining overall appreciation of a subject i.e. central theme...[and]...difficulty in assessing relative importance of various sections of a subject"; "not knowing how you're going comparative to other students".

4 Problems of library access

This category containing 227 comments illustrates the many faceted problems of using a library at a distance: time delays, the constraints of a limited loan period and turnaround time, the need to work from a limited range of resources, difficulties in selecting references, and the lack of opportunity to browse in selecting material. One hundred and seventy two comments were specifically concerned with the lack of direct access to library facilities, for example, "the Thatcher is good but it's not the same as running own eye along the shelves"; "inability to check library books out for their relevance to my needs before borrowing them". Illustrations of comments on related matters are: "time involved to write for and receive relevant resource materials - for [town], nine days' wait due to transport and postage times"; "reliance on Aust. post"; "limited journal or periodical material at the local DES library".

5 Lack of classroom contact

One hundred and seventy eight comments were made in this area, 86 of them being concerned with the lack of tutorials or study groups, and 57 with the lack of lecture contact which was seen to be valuable for its opportunities for verbal clarifications and elaboration of ideas, and its motivating value. Typical comments were: "if it is a subject in which tutorials are not available, I often feel a sense of desperation 'me against the world' and would appreciate having someone to share my doubts and fears with"; "no set times to work in: I think it would be easier to attend a couple of hours of lectures and tutorials than have to wade through the sets of notes and readings".

6 The availability of courses, the supply of lecture material and the return of assignments

These were the three main considerations of this category, which contained 141 comments. Typical comments were: "there is no such thing as receiving notes too early, however too late dramatically increases your whole workload"; "last notes came after assignment mailing date"; "my first semester studying after 10 years break: assignments and voluntary work sent in was not returned until a few days before exams".

In addition to these six categories, which represent the opinions of groups of respondents ranging from 53 per cent to 9 per cent of all respondents in the survey, there were two other, but very small, categories which were logically distinct from the others. One contained only 16 comments, all negative comments about the apparent attitudes of internal departments to their external students. The other contained eight comments critical of administrative processes within the University.

An earlier section of this Report has drawn attention to the substantial volume of personal communications directed by students to academic staff during the year, to students' appreciation of personal contacts with staff and with other

students, and to the wish of many students that opportunities for personal contacts should be increased. Their implications are reinforced by the many comments on the adverse effects of isolation, the problems of library access and the lack of classroom contact.

General comments

The final section of the questionnaires to currently enrolled and to discontinued students invited them to make comments on any matter they considered to be important, including aspects of subjects they had studied.

From the responses, 843 comments were classified into 39 subcategories, as shown in Table 17. The categories are grouped under five main headings according to their relevance to the experience of studying within DES, teaching methods, the organisation of courses, learning resources and teaching contacts.

1 Appreciation of DES service

When respondents in a survey are asked to comment on any relevant matter they consider to be important, the occurrence of even a comparatively small number of similar references to any one matter can be worth noting. Among the 39 subcategories of response, the largest category contained 107 responses of which the following is typical: "I have always appreciated the library service, the issue of notes, the cheerful and warm encouragement from my lecturers which compensates for lack of personal contact". A related group of 37 comments concerns positive aspects of being an external student, for example, "external studies excellent method for geographically isolated students. It would be a great shame to see it wane through lack of bureaucratic interest/funds". Also associated is a group of 15 comments on the positive qualities of DES notes and guides, and 38 statements commending the Thatcher Library. These four categories contain 23 per cent of the total of 843 comments. There are also several smaller categories which

TABLE 17

Respondents' Comments Based on Their Experience as External Students

Comments	Currently enrolled		Discontinued enrolment		Totals
	Non-metrop.	Metrop.	Non-metrop.	Metrop.	
Comments on the experience of studying within DES					
1 DES and its staff are efficient, friendly	58	25	20	4	107
2 Other commitments create difficulties for the student	11	5	24	8	48
3 Thatcher Library provides an efficient service	24	4	8	2	38
4 Positive aspects of experience as an external student	20	6	6	5	37
5 Combination of (2) and (4)			19	5	24
6 Positive qualities of DES notes and guides	6	4	3	2	15
7 Difficulties with external studies mode	1		13	1	15
8 Negative comments on internal departments providing external notes	7	1	5	1	14
9 Combination of (2) and (7)			3	1	4
Totals	127	45	101	29	302
Comments implying the need for improvements in teaching methods					
1 Criticism of the style, length or adequacy of lecture notes	31	14	16	1	52
2 Need to improve the quality of feedback on assignments	18	8	4	2	32
3 Difficulties associated with present assessment methods or preferences for other forms	22	3	2		27
4 Desirability of planning assignments to be teaching-learning devices	17	2	3	1	23
5 Need for guidelines to the interpretation of assignment questions or aid in preparing for examinations	11	9	3		23
6 Excessive amount, or breadth of reading required	9	2	1	2	14
7 Excessive assessment via assignments or examinations	7	1	1		9
8 Combination of (1) and (2)	1	1	3		5
9 Need for comparative information on assignment quality	3	1			4
Totals	119	41	23	6	189

cont.

Comments	Currently enrolled:		Discontinued enrolment		Totals
	Non-metrop.	Metrop.	Non-metrop.	Metrop.	
Comments implying the need for improvements in the organisation of courses					
1 Need to extend the range of subjects and/or courses offered	31	14	15	5	65
2 Untimely despatch of required material	19	4	6		29
3 Unpopularity of year-long subjects or First Semester subjects examined in November	13	1	2	1	17
4 Undue delays in the return of marked assignments	10	3	3		16
5 Need to improve the frequency of subject availability	9	3	3		15
6 Credit point values of some subjects are too low	7	2	2		11
7 DES Handbook should include fuller course details (assessment, textbooks)	2	2	1		5
Totals	91	29	32	6	158
Comments mainly implying the need for improvements in learning resources					
1 Need for study skills counselling, orientation procedure	16	4	11	1	32
2 Dissatisfaction with administrative requirements	13	4	6	2	25
3 Need for greater use of modern educational technology	10	3	3	1	17
4 Direct access to libraries unavailable or delays and cost associated with Thatcher Library borrowings	10	3	2		15
5 Lack of availability of books	1	2	4		7
6 Textbooks are expensive	4		2	1	7
7 Inadequacies of local libraries	3		2	1	6
Totals	57	16	30	6	109
Comments on the nature of teaching contacts					
1 Comments asserting the value of tutorials	18	6	8	1	33
2 Need to reduce impersonality in lecturer/student relationship	14	1	3		18
3 Positive comments on study schools	5	3	2		10
4 Positive comments on lecturers or lecturers' visits	5		3	1	9
5 Negative comments on lecturers or on lack of contact with lecturer	3	1	1	1	6
6 Need for more weekend seminars	3	2			5
7 Negative comments on tutorials	3	1			4
Totals	51	14	17	3	85

Note: In addition there were 34 miscellaneous comments on such a wide range of topics that categorisation was not feasible.

either directly or by inference point to the value of the work of DES. That so substantial a proportion of all comments directly or by implication conveys positive sentiments about DES and the work it is doing is much to the credit of the Division.

Suggestions for improvement:

Other sections of this Report have drawn attention to the adversities to which so many students in DES must submit: isolation, the demands made upon them by full time employment and family responsibilities, changes in residence, and so on. It is therefore not surprising that, of the remainder of the comments categorised, the majority suggested improvements in DES resources or practices which might improve the lot of the learner.

2 Improvement in the organisation of courses

The strongest call for improvement in the organisation of courses (65 comments) related to the range of subjects or courses available. Typical comments were: "please more variety in Arts subjects e.g. psychology, sociology.", and "I am currently studying subjects which I chose as 'the best of a bad bunch' simply to satisfy requirements". In an allied area, 15 comments sought improvement in the frequency of subject availability.

Twenty nine comments sought changes in the mailing of study material. Some of these favoured the provision of most or all of the course at the beginning of the semester. Examples are: "my main problem was that I did not receive lecture notes in time for me to organise my study. There was too long a gap between notes arriving. I personally feel that they could all be forwarded at the start of the semester", and "post all notes at the commencement of course. This will (a) save postage (b) allow an overview of the course (c) enable students to choose assignment topics and areas of specialization more confidently".

While there were no comments suggesting the provision of more year subjects, 17 comments sought more single semester subjects, criticised the examination of First Semester subjects in November, or opposed year subjects.

Delay in the return of marked assignments is a source of difficulty for any student. When it occurs to external students, its potential for harm can be great. One respondent wrote, "I feel that all assignments done during the semester should be returned to students before they sit for the exams. It would help to go into the exam with a little confidence". Sixteen comments were made on the need for the prompt return of assignments.

3 Improvement in teaching methods

Lecture notes, at present the mainstay of the external system, attracted 52 comments. There were indications that some students prefer what others dislike. For example, one person found the lecture notes overly pompous and long winded, another found some notes too personal and chatty. Another found reading guides better than notes, which tend to duplicate. Some found course outlines not always detailed enough (for example, one respondent wrote, "would have been beneficial if there had been a work program...issued prior to commencement of the course summarising when assignments were due etc.").

The following two comments convey much of the feeling of the 32 respondents who commented on the need to improve the quality of feedback on assignments: "more positive criticisms of assignments. My latest major assignment had the comment - a fair effort - 4"; "the main problem is feedback on assignments and the most important aspect of this is a comparison with the progress of others". Another 23 comments concerned the function of assignments as teaching-learning devices. A positive comment was "layout of [subject] was conducive to a more constant style of study by virtue of the continuous workshops

which had to be forwarded to the lecturer". Twenty three comments indicated that some students felt the need for assignment questions to be more clearly structured and to be accompanied by suggestions for appropriate readings, etc. Others sought clearer indications of what is expected of students in examinations. Examples of comments are: "I would like to see some discussion on the questions and guidelines in their interpretation and even some suggestions on relevant reading matter...internal students can ask tutors or lecturers...", and "I feel more information regarding exam preparation could be given...more direction for areas of specialisation and ...a general indication of what type of questions to expect".

Twenty seven comments related to assessment methods. Such matters as a preference for the continuous assessment method with the abolition of final examinations, and the clashing of due dates for assignments, were raised on several occasions.

4 Improvements in learning resources

Reference was earlier made to a group of favourable comments concerning the Thatcher Library. In contrasting categories, a few comments reflected the despair of students isolated from other libraries and the disappointment of those who were denied borrowing rights by other tertiary institutions.

Thirty two comments concerned the need for study guidance, orientation, etc. For example, "I would advise new external students to make every effort to attend orientation courses or study schools".

Dissatisfaction with administrative requirements provoked 25 comments. Possibly some comments would not have been made had the writers been aware of all the factors bearing upon the particular issue they raised. This is one of the consequences of isolation. Other comments seem to have had a much firmer basis, for example, "my exam papers were mislaid last year - as a result

I thought I'd failed my exam and was caused much needless anxiety".

A group of 17 comments made suggestions for educational innovations, principally audiotapes of lectures and tutorials or videotapes of lectures. Other suggestions were for assessment of the quality of lectures, and limited provision for students to study elective areas outside the normal curriculum.

The nature of teaching contacts

Thirty three comments were either favourable towards tutorials in which the writers had participated, or referred to the benefit that tutorials could confer, if made available. The following comment is indicative: "If I...continue with my subjects externally, I will try to choose subjects which have sufficient numbers to warrant a tutor. A weekly or even fortnightly tutorial makes all the difference...the notes are helpful but a good tutor can help to clarify some of the more obscure points".

Eighteen comments bore upon the need for more personal interaction between lecturers and students, for the lecturer to come through in lecture notes as a person, for lecturers to show more personal interest in students; in sum, to compensate for the impersonality which is brought about by distance.

Apart from the first category (the experience of study within DES), the invitation to students to make relevant comments or suggestions on matters they considered important drew more suggestions relating to the teaching function than to counselling needs. Concerning the latter, however, there is the reiteration of two points made earlier: the need for study skills counselling or an orientation procedure, and for aid in preparing for examinations.

6 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The survey reported here was undertaken during 1980 to gain information and opinions about areas in which external students might benefit from the assistance of an educational counsellor. As a background for these, the survey also sought descriptive information about the external students whom such a person might serve.

The survey shows DES students in 1980 as characteristically of mature age; meeting family, work and other responsibilities while studying; experiencing difficulties associated with isolation; and considering university studies to be important in their systems of priorities (though clearly occupying an inferior position to family and work). The majority were studying to improve their present professional qualifications or to gain new qualifications. Many already held tertiary qualifications. Few had entered the University under special entry provisions for mature age students. Many expressed appreciation for the work done by DES and for distance learning as such. Many contributed suggestions as to ways in which the University might do more to assist them.

A growing literature attests to the need for counselling and information services for adult learners. Responses in this survey also indicate a need for the provision of more and earlier pre-enrolment course planning advice and subject information, both in printed form and in person to person discussion. If improvements were to be made to the nature and scope of the subject information provided by DES before enrolment, it would be desirable to combine the efforts of academic staff and an educational counsellor. Similar collaboration would be desirable for the success of any orientation programme made available to those of the large group of students enrolling in DES for the first time who were able to attend.

Relatively few students who discontinued courses consulted a member of the University before doing so. The circumstances prompting discontinuation were often to do with students' other commitments. When counselling and advice are made available to internal students they can often be assisted to complete a semester in the face of what at first appear to them to be insurmountable difficulties. Despite the communication difficulties associated with distance learning, provision could be made for direct, if brief, consultations with a counsellor during semester. This, in conjunction with an expanded programme of pre-enrolment advice and a counselling input into the present supply of information and advice throughout the year could contribute to the reduction of discontinuations.

The survey indicates that despite the maturity of DES students, many of them would like to improve their study performance in various ways. Improved time management and reading skills could assist many to bring their performance to higher standards. The many comments to the effect that students would like more information from their lecturers about standards required in assignments suggest that, apart from any other measures that might be taken, additional assistance in the general approach to assignment writing would be well received, and associated with this, general advice on study as a creative activity. In addition, it appears that numbers of students require assistance in other aspects of studying. A counsellor could considerably extend the assistance at present provided to students in developing their learning skills.

It appears that a number of students attending study schools would appreciate more concentration, in lectures and tutorials, on sections of their subjects which they find diffucult, or which are of central importance to the structure of the subjects. This would call for the provision of more advance information on study school programmes, with time allowed for intending participants to communicate their needs to lecturers.

Comments in relation to DES activities which employ small group interaction as a teaching medium (for example, local tutorials and some elements of study schools) suggest that there is scope for consultation between tutors, a counsellor, perhaps a representative of the Tertiary Education Institute, and students, with a view to increasing the efficacy of these activities.

During 1980, many currently enrolled external students contacted academic (and administrative) staff members by letter, telegram or personal visit. Despite this, many respondents indicated their interest in increasing personal contacts with DES staff members in order to discuss subject content, students' aspirations, arrangements for receiving and giving information, and so on. It is known that many internal students regard counsellors as "neutral" but student centred sources of information and advice, and it is likely that external students would also take advantage of opportunities to consult a counsellor in the same way. If the assistance of a studies counsellor were available to external students, there would be no implication that academic and administrative staff members of the Division should of necessity cease to carry out the types of advising and counselling that they now do. The availability of a studies counsellor would allow the extension of what is already being done, as well as new initiatives. It would be important that such a person should liaise extensively with other providers of assistance to students.

Respondents commented on liked and disliked aspects of external studies and made comments and suggestions on matters considered by them to be important. In some instances, suggestions were made for changes in the educational practices followed by DES. These suggestions reflect respondents' perceived academic needs. In addition, counselling needs were reiterated: for precourse assistance, for study skills development, for aid in preparing for examinations. There were also areas where academic and counselling needs might be interlinked: needs to overcome the effects of isolation and of distance, to develop independence in study, to communicate individually with DES staff. Such comments and suggestions may

be seen as a challenge to provide further assistance to external students, among whom there is a strong body of feeling that there is much that is good in distance learning and in the work of the Division of External Studies.

Appendices to this Report set down objectives which could be served by the work of an educational counsellor in the Division of External Studies and illustrate ways in which the work of a counsellor might supplement steps already being taken to assist prospective students from the stage of their first enquiry to DES (usually in the latter part of the year prior to their first enrolment) and the stage of the first mailing of course material to them. Though the Appendices suggest the provision of different advisory material for students who are totally new to tertiary study from that for other new students, no attempt has been made to design for the former group a course related preliminary learning experience. This is a matter which would require consultation among staff members of the Division of External Studies. A number of the actions for the benefit of prospective students which are illustrated in the Appendices could be commenced without the appointment of an educational counsellor to the staff of the Division.

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APPENDICES

The following appendices suggest objectives which would be served by the work of an educational counsellor in the Division of External Studies and illustrate certain actions which might be initiated for the benefit of prospective students. If it were decided to undertake such action for those enrolling for the first time in 1982, it would be necessary to take preparatory steps in 1981. The appendices indicate the times at which such steps would need to occur. It is obvious that although the appendices assume the eventual appointment of a counsellor, certain actions could be taken without the appointment of such a person.

No attempt is made to portray ways in which the work of a counsellor could in due course be integrated with the activities of the University Centres. It could reasonably be expected, however, that this would be required if a counsellor had become established at St. Lucia.

The material in the appendices has been composed without the benefit of discussions of actual or proposed policies for the Division of External Studies for the near future. It must therefore of necessity be suggestive rather than final.

CONTENTS

i An advisory and counselling service for external students

ii Extending the provision of assistance for prospective students

iii Items of information which might be supplied to prospective entrants to undergraduate courses prior to their applying to QTAC for quota entry

iv Additional material which might be offered to intending QTAC applicants who have never studied at tertiary level

v An orientation programme at St. Lucia for new external students

vi Information to accompany the first mailing of course material to new external students

Appendix i

AN ADVISORY AND COUNSELLING SERVICE FOR EXTERNAL STUDENTS

This Appendix assumes the appointment within the Division of External Study of a specialist staff member who would work towards such general aims as providing pre-enrolment information for new DES students, improving the provision of course planning assistance for DES students at all stages of their courses, and providing assistance to students experiencing difficulty in studying effectively.

Such a staff member, who will here be referred to as a studies counsellor, would need to make it known that he or she would interact with students on a confidential basis in the cases of students who seek such an agreement, while otherwise undertaking to act prudently and in the students' best interests.

The following objectives would be served by the work of a studies counsellor:

(i) to provide pre-enrolment information for new students

This would require that DES make use of existing resources to advertise DES study opportunities throughout Queensland, urging those interested in taking up external study to write to the Director of DES when lodging QTAC applications, or beforehand if they wish. It would also be necessary to advertise to the same effect in the metropolitan and provincial presses.

A studies counsellor would assemble a package of pre-enrolment information and advice, accompanied by a letter over the Director's name, for forwarding to prospective new students on receipt of requests, and invite further written, voice tape or phone enquiries or enquiries in person from prospective new external students.

(ii) to provide an on-campus orientation for those new students able to attend, and to mail orientation material to other new students

(iii) to contribute to the provision of course planning assistance for DES students

In a message accompanying the first mailing of the year, a studies counsellor would invite both new students and established students to contact him or her by letter, voice tape, phone or personal visit to discuss course planning difficulties. He or she would also liaise with teaching staff and with deans in aiding students in course planning; participate appropriately in DES Study Schools and where possible at Weekend Seminars; supply Counselling Services' Career Search leaflets for distribution to enquirers; and where necessary, refer students with career choice and job finding enquiries to Counselling Services, whose assistance is available by letter or phone or in person on the St. Lucia campus.

(iv) to improve the provision of aid to students who have difficulty in studying effectively

A studies counsellor would invite students to write, send a voice tape, phone or call personally concerning study difficulties; respond by individual communication supplemented where necessary by prepared leaflets on aspects of studying; invite lecturers to encourage students whose assignments are overdue to discuss their difficulties with the studies counsellor; liaise with staff of University Centres in assisting students to acquire effective study methods; liaise with teaching staff members in relation to study difficulties commonly associated with given subjects; participate appropriately in DES Study Schools and where possible at Weekend Seminars.

(v) to provide assistance to students considering discontinuation of their studies

A studies counsellor, when requested, would provide assistance to such students in assessing their options and, where necessary, in modifying their study approaches.

(vi) to make available to students an additional source of information and advice which is oriented towards students' educational and personal development but not qualitatively or functionally identical with educational and administrative sources

A studies counsellor would invite students to write, send a voice tape, phone or call personally to discuss their difficulties. He or she would offer direct aid, advice, or referral to other agencies in the students' localities or to Counselling Services.

(vii) to offer information or advice to (and to seek information and advice from) members of the teaching staff when in a position to do so, in the interests of improved teaching and learning.

(viii) to conduct periodic reviews of the advisory and counselling assistance provided for external students.

Should the Division of External Studies commence to make use of radio or television in providing its services to the community, a studies counsellor could be expected to make use of these media in communicating with students.

The types of duties indicated above have something in common with the work of members of the University's Counselling Services, though they go further in certain directions, not so far in others. For example, detailed course planning advice for internal students is in general a matter for departmental academic advisers, or members of a Dean's office, yet much course planning assistance could be given to external students by a person who was familiar with DES subjects and with the rules of the faculties in which most DES students are enrolled. Such a person would, of course, liaise extensively with the Deans' offices. Much of the advisory work would need to be done at a distance, by letter or by phone. By contrast, of the activities in which tertiary student counsellors engage, the most frequent one is usually direct interpersonal interaction in individual interviews.

Appendix ii

EXTENDING THE PROVISION OF ASSISTANCE FOR PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS

The survey returns suggest that in 1980 about 1,100 students who enrolled in DES were undertaking external studies for the first time. Almost a quarter of these students were also enrolling at the tertiary level for the first time. The needs of external students for enrolment information and advice are at least as great as the needs of students enrolling internally. Those who are enrolling at tertiary level for the first time and who will be living outside Brisbane (a group of about 190 in 1980) are especially in need of assistance.

Existing enrolment procedures make it difficult for prospective DES students to gain adequate pre-enrolment information and course planning assistance. The first round of enrolment offers is not mailed until just prior to the Christmas-New Year break and the second about a month later. Enrolments are due by the middle of January. Although some prospective students write or call for pre-enrolment information, it is only in January that applicants' intentions to study externally necessarily become known to DES. But if new external students, whether school leavers or of mature age, are to be offered adequate opportunities to plan their enrolments and to prepare themselves to take up study on a regular basis, their first contacts with DES need to be made in the preceding academic year. Adequate preliminary publicity would make it possible for DES to mail selected advisory material to applicants, to hold individual interviews with some of them at St. Lucia, and to provide an orientation meeting for some of them at St. Lucia prior to the receipt of their first lectures. Students would not only gain valuable preliminary insights into study possibilities at the University of Queensland but would be able to choose not to enrol (if that is their decision) without adverse consequences for their educational records. It is unlikely that excessive funding would be required for such measures, which are both educationally and economically desirable in the interests of keeping to a minimum the discontinuation of enrolment during semester.

In order to introduce such a system for 1982 it would be necessary to take advantage of existing publicity arrangements and also to advertise in Queensland newspapers. The following action is suggested:

Queensland Tertiary Courses

Entries for this publication are sought from faculties, etc., in April-May each year. By April-May 1981*, request the Registrar to add to the brief note on External Study (p. 21 in the 1981 edition) a statement advising prospective new external

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* This section of the Appendix had been submitted to the Director of External Studies in May 1981.

students to write to DES for pre-enrolment information when lodging QTAC applications, or beforehand if they wish.

Know Your University

This publication, which is distributed to new internal students, has proved to be very useful in advising prospective internal students throughout the year. It is desirable to arrange for the printing of additional copies to enable DES both to provide a copy for each new external student in February 1982 and to retain enough copies to meet the needs of enquirers during 1982. (The 1981 edition did not contain a photograph of the Director of External Studies. The existence of a Division of External Studies warrants the inclusion of such a photograph in future editions and the enlargement of the section on the Division of External Studies. Material for inclusion would be required by the Information Officer in November 1981.)

Study At Home

Add an entry advising prospective external students to write to DES for pre-enrolment information when lodging QTAC applications, or beforehand if they wish.

Advertisements In Selected Queensland Newspapers

In August 1981 place in metropolitan and major country newspapers suitable advertisements encouraging prospective new students to write to DES for pre-enrolment information.

University of Queensland Enrolment Guide

In August-September request the Registrar to include in the Enrolment Guide a brief statement about an orientation programme at St. Lucia in mid-January for new external students.

Department of External Studies Handbook

Add an entry advising prospective external students to write to DES for pre-enrolment information when lodging QTAC applications, or beforehand if they wish.

University of Queensland Department of External Studies Country-Part Time Tutors

Add a statement encouraging tutors to advise prospective external students to write to DES for pre-enrolment information when lodging QTAC applications, or beforehand if they wish.

University Centres

Provide centres with a poster to the same effect, and appropriate quantities of all relevant leaflets.

DES Newsletter

Encourage students to tell prospective students of the new provisions.

DES Academic Staff

Provide suitable briefing for academic staff making country visits.

Counselling Services

Provide Counselling Services with copies of Study At Home for distribution at school careers events.

Appendix iii

ITEMS OF INFORMATION WHICH MIGHT BE SUPPLIED TO PROSPECTIVE ENTRANTS TO UNDERGRADUATE COURSES PRIOR TO THEIR APPLYING TO QTAC FOR QUOTA ENTRY

A Letter from Director of External Studies

B Items which are published regularly, and specimens of which are not included here:

Study At Home or University of Queensland Division of External Studies Information Brochure

Know Your University

Rules For Entry To Bachelor Degree Courses

Application For Quota Entry form, if available

*Division Of External Studies Handbook, if available

C* Notes On Undergraduate Degree Courses Offered By The Division Of External Studies (to be used in the event that the Handbook is unavailable.)

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* Responses in the survey indicate that many enrolled students wish to have foreknowledge of what it is really like to study certain subjects, going beyond the outlines set down in the Handbook and the Notes. This is a confirmation of an opinion expressed by at least two of the persons consulted concerning this Appendix, one of whom wrote "...I feel there is a need for a more detailed set of leaflets on the different subject areas. For example, a Government leaflet detailing the content of subjects as well as practical divisions into theoretical courses, courses on Australian Politics, Public Administration, etc. Useful groupings of subjects to form a more coherent major and subjects from other disciplines which might be suitable companion subjects would also be listed. Similar leaflets would be envisaged for English, History, Economics and Education".

Composing such leaflets is essentially an academic task which can only be suggested at the present time. There is no doubt, however, of the benefit the leaflets could bring to students.

In order to keep within reasonable limits the amount of information sent to prospective students, Notes might be limited to those for the Faculty or Faculties in which interest had been expressed.

A

Division of External Studies,
University of Queensland,
St. Lucia, Queensland, 4067.

Dear Sir/Madam,

You have asked for pre-enrolment information in the hope that an application you are lodging for entry to an undergraduate course next year will be successful, and so that you can begin to think about a suitable subject (or subjects) in which to enrol within the Division of External Studies. You probably know that unless you are already taking a course at the University, you will need to apply through the Queensland Tertiary Admissions Centre for entry to a Bachelor degree course in the Division of External Studies. To do this you should obtain an Application For Quota Entry form from QTAC and complete and return the form to:-

Queensland Tertiary Admissions Centre,
314 Hawken Drive,
ST. LUCIA. Q. 4067.

by October, 1981. Applications received after this date are subject to a late fee. The QTAC phone number is (07) 377 2322. Application Form A is for school leavers, who gain a Tertiary Entrance Score calculated by the State Board of Secondary School Studies. Form B is for all other applicants. When you ask for the Application form, ask also for a copy of the booklet Queensland Tertiary Courses, which gives useful information about each course offered by Universities and CAE's in Queensland.

Successful applicants receive their enrolment forms by post just before Christmas, or sometimes in a later mailing in January-February. It is only by completing the enrolment form that student status in the Division of External Studies can be gained, after which lecture notes and study guides can be despatched.

I am enclosing with this letter a selection of information which I hope you will find helpful.

*If you would like to discuss any aspects of your intended enrolment, I suggest that you write to, or phone Henry Brown,** our Studies Counsellor in the Division of External Studies. His phone number is (07) 377 .... It is especially advisable to contact him if your secondary education has been incomplete and you are applying for special entry as a mature age student, or if you have completed secondary schooling but have never carried out tertiary studies before and it is a long time since you left school.

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* If there is no studies counsellor in DES, this paragraph would need rewording so that enquiries were directed to some staff member or members who might, among other things, supply to them the Guide To External Studies.

** Ascription of gender is merely for illustrative purposes.

I hope that if you enrol in the Division of External Studies in 1982 your studies will be successful and satisfying.

Yours sincerely,

Director

B

ITEMS WHICH ARE PUBLISHED REGULARLY, AND SPECIMENS OF WHICH ARE NOT INCLUDED HERE

Study At Home or University of Queensland Division of External Studies Information Brochure

Know Your University

Rules For Entry To Bachelor Degree Courses

Application For Quota Entry form, if available

Division Of External Studies Handbook, if available

C

NOTES ON UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE COURSES OFFERED BY THE DIVISION OF EXTERNAL STUDIES

THE BACHELOR OF ARTS COURSE

This brief introductory note is based upon rules in effect in 1981. For full details about the B.A. course, please refer to the Undergraduate Degree Handbook, obtainable from the University Bookshop, University of Queensland, St. Lucia, 4067. The 1982 edition of the Undergraduate Degree Handbook will be on sale in November 1981.

The subjects offered for external study in the Faculty of Arts include English, History, Geography, Economics, Government, Mathematics, Classics and Ancient History, French, German, Japanese, Studies in Religion, Perspectives on Mining and Computer Science. A limited number of Education and Commerce subjects can also be studied in Arts.

The normal requirements for entry to the B.A. Course are shown in the Rules For Entry To Bachelor Degree Courses. But candidates, particularly mature age candidates, who have not satisfied the minimum entry requirements as set out in the University of Queensland Entry Rules but who have other qualifications may apply for admission to the Arts quota. For example a person who had held commercial positions over a period of years which had obviously entailed considerable responsibility and who had obtained two grades of 5 in Senior subjects by recent part-time study could apply for admission to the quota. If the application was not successful the candidate could continue to complete the full requirements for adult entry.

Because of the comparative nature of selection through the Queensland Tertiary Admissions Centre it is impossible to give an applicant any preliminary indication of his or her chances of admission, but applicants should be careful to include on the application form all information which is indicative of their capabilities (for example, any evidence of any study undertaken since leaving school for private purposes or professional qualifications and of professional responsibilities undertaken and held) together with a statement of their reasons for wishing to undertake tertiary study within the Faculty of Arts.

Structure of B.A. pass degree course

All University subjects are assigned credit point values. Most Arts subjects are 10 credit point subjects. Credit point values are assigned in such a way that, for example, a 10 credit

point subject would require about 10 hours study per week (including private study, assignment writing, and lectures and tutorials) throughout the semester if it were a semester subject, or half that if a year subject.

External students normally take between 10 and 30 points per semester; the external student who can manage 30 credit points successfully per semester would usually either be exceptionally able or not have heavy work or home commitments. External students may not enrol in more than 60 points over the whole year, and new external students are advised to take no more than 20 points in their first semester.

In the 240 credit points required for the B.A. degree students must include at least two majors or one double major, i.e., students are required to have at least one or two areas of speciality. A major consists of 60 credit points in subjects offered by one department or in related subjects offered by two or more departments. A double major consists of 120 credit points in subjects offered by one department or in related subjects offered by two or more departments. Each department has its own rules about how majors and double majors are to be made up and details of the departmental requirements are given in the Undergraduate Degree Handbook. It is vital that students familiarise themselves with the requirements for majors in their areas of specialization.

The maximum number of credit points which can be gained in any department is normally 160.

B.A./LL.B. degree

The only combined degree course available within the Faculty of Arts is the course leading to the degrees of Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Laws. To undertake any law subjects a student must first gain admission to the LA101 (Introduction to Law) quota, as well as to the Arts quota.

To complete the B.A. degree under the combined B.A./LL.B. degree rules a student must obtain a total of 270 points consisting of -

140 points in Arts subjects, including one major and including at least 20 points in history and/or government subjects; and

130 points from the law subjects listed in the first two years of the LL.B. degree.

NOTES ON UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE COURSES OFFERED BY THE DIVISION OF EXTERNAL STUDIES

THE BACHELOR OF EDUCATIONAL STUDIES COURSE

This brief introductory note is based upon rules in effect in 1981. For full details about the B.Ed.St. course, please refer to the Undergraduate Degree Handbook, obtainable from the University Bookshop, University of Queensland, St. Lucia, 4067. The 1982 edition of the Handbook will be on sale in November, 1981.

The degree is designed primarily as an in-service qualification for those already qualified as teachers. It can be undertaken as a first degree only by those who are already trained as teachers or who are enrolled in an approved teacher training institution. In certain cases a substantial period of teaching experience is accepted in lieu of teacher training.

Without a course of Teacher Education a graduate will not qualify for teacher registration in Queensland.

Education subjects are assigned credit point values varying between 10 and 30 credit points. Credit point values are assigned in such a way that, for example, a 10 credit point subject would require about 10 hours study per week throughout the semester if it were a semester subject, or half that if a year subject.

The number of credit points required for the degree is 240. One hundred and fifty of these must be gained from Education subjects, and 90 from non-Education subjects.

The Non-Education section of the degree

The 90 credit points for the non-Education subjects must be gained from at least two different departments in the Faculties of Arts, Science, Commerce or Economics.

(a) For example, History and English, or Economics and Government.

(b) At least 40 credit points must be gained from introductory subjects in at least two departments.

(c) At least 40 credit points must be gained from those same departments in advanced subjects for which the introductory subjects were prerequisites.

(d) The remaining 10 points may be at introductory or advanced level, and may be chosen from a third department.

(e) If credit is granted for a three-year Diploma of Teaching, one of these subjects is equated with your College major. You will include only one non-Education subject area in your degree.

The Education section of the degree

EDUCATION I subjects: 20 credit points. These must be gained by completing ED 101-Becoming Australian: The Cultural Context of Education, and ED 150-Child Growth and Development.

EDUCATION II subjects: 40 credit points. These are made up of four semester subjects, each carrying 10 credit points. You should choose these subjects to cover the prerequisites for the Education III subjects you wish to study.

EDUCATION III subjects: 90 credit points. These are made up of six semester subjects, each carrying 15 credit points, or of a combination of semester subjects worth 15 credit points each and full-year subjects worth 30 credit points each. Many Education III subjects have specific pre-requisites at the Education II level. It is possible to enrol in Education III subjects after completing 40 credit points in Education and 60 credit points in non-Education subjects.

Credit from previous studies

If you are eligible for substantial credit, you should choose Education II subjects carefully in order to satisfy prerequisites for the Education III subjects you intend to take.

Graduates. The B.Ed.St. degree may be pursued as a second degree. See the special provisions for credit from the first degree in the Undergraduate Degree Handbook.

Diplomas in Education. Students who have been awarded a University Diploma in Education may qualify for the B.Ed.St. degree by obtaining 90 credit points from Education III subjects, any pre-requisites for Education III subjects being waived.

Diplomas in Teaching. If you have completed a three year Diploma you may be granted credit for 90 points. The degree is completed by gaining 20 introductory non-Education points, 20 advanced non-Education points (all 40 points from one subject area, in a subject which was not your major at College), 20 points in Education II and 90 points in Education III subjects.

If you have other qualifications and may be eligible for credit, you should write to the Registrar, supplying documentary evidence of your qualifications.

NOTES ON UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE COURSES OFFERED BY THE DIVISION OF EXTERNAL STUDIES

THE BACHELOR OF ECONOMICS COURSE

This brief introductory note is based upon rules in effect in 1981. For full details about the B.Econ. course, please refer to the Undergraduate Degree Handbook, obtainable from the University Bookshop, University of Queensland, St. Lucia, 4067. The 1982 edition of the Undergraduate Degree Handbook will be on sale in November 1981.

The normal requirements for entry to the B.Econ. course are shown in the Rules For Entry to Bachelor Degree Courses. Persons over 21 years of age who have not satisfied the normal or full Mature Age Entry requirements may nevertheless apply for admission to the Commerce and Economics quota. The basis for application is a capacity to undertake tertiary studies, demonstrated either by some post-secondary study or by some other qualifications. Persons over 21 years of age who lack formal qualifications but who feel that their experience and interests would enable them to undertake tertiary study successfully should not be discouraged from applying. All applications for adult entry should include a substantial statement of the applicant's relevant background, interests, and reasons for wishing to undertake tertiary study.

Studying Economics with the Division of External Studies

The economics subjects offered externally provide an introduction to modern economic theory and modern economic analysis. They are invaluable for people whose occupation or career requires knowledge of, and ability to use, economic concepts, but understanding modern economics is also worthwhile for people who do not intend to specialize in economics. The Bachelor of Economics degree is basically designed to satisfy the requirements of the first group of people. There are, however, substantial opportunities to study economics while pursuing degrees in arts, commerce and education, and there is some flexibility in how subjects may be selected.

At first level there is a large element of choice. For example, if you are interested in economics in a non-specialized way, you would find certain first level subjects particularly interesting as they are intended to provide a broad perspective of economics and its different aspects rather than a narrow focus on technique. Advanced economics has become very technical, relying on the use of statistical and mathematical concepts. If you feel you may wish to specialise in economics and to proceed to further studies, you might seriously consider the study of the more statistical subjects available at first and second levels.

Course planning for the degree of Bachelor of Economics

All University subjects are assigned credit point values. Most Economics subjects are 10 credit point subjects. Credit point values are assigned in such a way that, for example, a 10 credit

point subject would require about 10 hours study per week throughout the semester (including private study, assignment writing and lectures and tutorials) if it were a semester subject, or half that if a year subject.

The basic structure of the pass degree of Bachelor of Economics requires that 80 credit points be obtained from subjects which provide the basic body of economic theory; 80 credit points from subjects providing more advanced studies in economics; and 80 credit points from a group of optional subjects. Full details of these requirements, including the rules relating to the sequence of subjects, are given in the Undergraduate Degree Handbook.

Course planning for the B.A. degree with an Economics major

Students enrolled in the Faculty of Arts may if they wish include up to 160 credit points of Economics in their degree. These subjects, however, must still be taken according to the rules relating to sequence of subjects.

Course planning for the B.Econ. degree combined with the LL.B.

In this case, students take 80 credit points in basic introductory Economics subjects, 60 credit points in elective economics subjects, and 100 credit points in law subjects. Please consult the Rules for Entry to Bachelor Degree Courses concerning entry to the quota for the subject Introduction to Law.

Course planning for the B.Ed.St. degree with Economics subjects

Students enrolled in the Faculty of Education who wish to take Economics are advised to commence their Economics studies with the subject EC 110 (Introductory Economics).

Course planning for students intending after graduating to enrol for the Diploma in Education

Students who might later wish to enrol for the Diploma in Education must include in their degree two curriculum study areas, i.e., subjects which are also taught in secondary schools. Within each curriculum study area 20 credit points must be taken at the first-year level and 40 credit points at advanced level.

NOTES ON UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE COURSES OFFERED BY THE DIVISION OF EXTERNAL STUDIES

THE LACHELOR OF COMMERCE COURSE

This brief introductory note is based upon rules in effect in 1981. For full details about the B.Com. course, please refer to the Undergraduate Degree Handbook, obtainable from tne University Bookshop, University of Queensland, St. Lucia, 4067. The 1982 edition of the Undergraduate Degree Handbook will be on sale in November 1981.

General Information

The normal requirements for entry to the B.Com. course are shown in the Rules for Entry To Bachelor Degree Courses. Persons over 21 years of age who have not satisfied the normal or full Mature Age Entry requirements may nevertheless apply for admission to the Commerce and Economics quota. The basis for application is a capacity to undertake tertiary studies, demonstrated either by some post-secondary study or by some other qualifications. Persons over 21 years of age who lack formal qualifications but who feel that their experience and interests would enable them to undertake tertiary study successfully should not be discouraged from applying. All applications for adult entry should include a substantial statement of the applicant's relevant background, interests, and reasons for wishing to undertake tertiary study.

Most Commerce students take Course 1, a three year full time (or six year part time) course. By the use of the available optional subjects, it can be planned in different ways by those who seek careers in general management (in business or government), as public accountants in private practice, or as teachers of accounting and commerce subjects.

Planning a Bachelor of Commerce course

All University subjects are assigned credit point values. Most Commerce subjects are 10 credit point subjects. Credit point values are assigned in such a way that, for example, a 10 credit point subject would require about 10 hours study per week throughout the semester (including private study, assignment writing, and lectures and tutorials) if it were a semester subject, or half that if a year subject.

Course 1

For the B.Com. degree a candidate must obtain a total of 240 credit points taken as follows:-

(a) all of 10 subjects known as Commerce Core subjects. These have in all a credit point value of 120.

(b) at least 6 subjects (60 credit points) from subjects listed as Commerce Electives, including at least 40 credit points in level 3 subjects.

(c) the remaining 60 credit points may be obtained in any subjects provided that not more than 40 credit points of level 1 subjects may be included. (These subjects can come from Commerce Electives, from subjects offered by the Department of Economics, or from the subjects offered by any Department in any Faculty.)

It is essential to plan the course of study so that any pre-requisite subjects are completed prior to enrolment in advanced subjects.

Course 2

This is for those who wish to combine a Commerce Degree course with a Law Degree course (B.Com. and LL.B.). The combined courses take five years if studied full-time. However, to satisfy solicitors' admission requirements many students undertake 4 years of full-time study and complete their Law degree by a further 2 years of part-time study while working in Law offices. This course is for those who desire to obtain a formal education in commerce (e.g. in accounting and finance) as well as in law.

NOTES ON UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE COURSES OFFERED BY THE DIVISION OF EXTERNAL STUDIES

THE BACHELOR OF LAWS COURSE

This brief introductory note is based upon rules in effect in 1981. For full details about the LL.B. course, please refer to the Undergraduate Degree Handbook, available from the University Bookshop, University of Queensland, St. Lucia, 4067. The 1982 edition of the Undergraduate Degree Handbook will be on sale in November 1981.

The Law School exists to disseminate knowledge of the law and to develop skills which will enable students to utilise this knowledge.

Gaining an awareness of existing Acts of Parliament, particular court decisions and general principles of law is an important part of legal training but knowledge of the law, in a fuller sense, includes knowing about the historical development of areas of the law, and the role of law in society.

Among the skills which the Law School attempts to develop in its students are-

Ability to use and interpret words and terms. Law, like every other occupation and discipline has its own vocabulary. The lawyer who has to draw a will, a lease or a contract, who has to read a statute or a by-law must come to realise the legal meaning and effect of words, phrases, and clauses in these documents - and to use them so that their meaning will be precise and clear to Courts and to other lawyers.

Ability to find the law. Today, no one can know all the law: but there are many technical aids which will enable a searcher to discover the legal rules governing any particular issue. In practice, a lawyer will often have to depend on his own skill and knowledge, without outside help, to find relevant acts, reports of cases, legal monographs and articles.

Ability to discover what is relevant in a mass of information. In any issue a lawyer must be competent to discard what is immaterial or trivial and to move easily from one step in thought to the next - seeing at each step the legal implications of particular facts.

Ability to think through legal issues. The solution of legal problems can involve a variety of reasoning processes. In rare situations, where there are no established legal quidelines it may be necessary to go back to basic principles in an attempt to establish how courts would deal with a particular situation.

Much legal reasoning is 'reasoning by example', often involving subtle distinctions or similarities which a court will have to consider - keeping in mind the history of the doctrines, their relationship to other principles, the degree to which common sense or justice or precedent would allow a decision in one field to be applied in a 'like' field - in order to determine where a 'line has to be drawn'.

Ability to express legal ideas in speech and writing. A lawyer needs to be able to stand before a tribunal and argue in good English or to draft pleadings setting out the client's case before trial or to write a letter that aptly expresses his intentions - all tasks involving skill in communicating his ideas to others.

The LL.B. Course

The normal requirements for entry to the LL.B. course are shown in the Rules For Entry To Bachelor Degree Courses.

All University subjects are assigned credit point values. Credit point values are assigned in such a way that, for example, a 10 credit point subject would require about 10 hours study per week throughout the semester (including private study, assignment writing and lectures and tutorials) if it were a semester subject, or about half that if a year subject. A 20 point year subject requires about 10 hours per week.

The LL.B. course is of 340 credit points and may be taken in a minimum period of four years by a full-time student. It may be taken by part-time external students in a longer period of time. To satisfy solicitors' admission requirements many students undertake 3 years of full-time study and complete their degree by a further 2 years of part-time study while working in Law Offices.

In essence, the LL.B. is a set course degree, except that first year students may select their own Arts subjects and fourth year students select their subjects from a range of elective subjects.

External students may enrol for up to 60 credit points worth of subjects in a year. The Law School recommends that, in general, they restrict their initial enrolment to the two first year law subjects, LA 101 Introduction to Law; and LA 102 Criminal Law. (This may be altered in 1982 to Introduction to Law and Contract.)

Graduates receive 40 credit points in recognition of their previous studies and are exempted from enrolling for the Arts subjects. Graduates enrolling in Law for the first time should enrol for the two first year subjects and may enrol for either LA 202 - Torts or LA 203 - Contract.

The selection of Arts subjects is essentially one for the individual student, but the Law School recommends that the 20 credit points in History or Government subjects be selected from topics relating to Australian History, British Constitutional History or Government.

Students should arrange access to reference books and Statutes wherever possible. Court libraries in provincial centres and even private collections held by local solicitors can be of assistance, but private collections are seldom sufficient for an external Law student's needs. Access to a comprehensive Law library is essential for the successful completion of the LL.B. as an external student, although such access may not be essential (although certainly desirable) during a student's first two years of study. Cases cannot be borrowed from the University of Queensland Library but may be obtained in some situations from the Thatcher Library.

Appendix iv

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL WHICH MIGHT BE OFFERED TO INTENDING QTAC APPLICANTS WHO HAVE NEVER STUDIED AT TERTIARY LEVEL

THINKING ABOUT EXTERNAL STUDY

This short guide is offered essentially for people who have done little study in the past or who have not carried out formal study for a long time.

Study as a part of your life

As you read about subjects and courses offered by the Division of External Studies, and about the requirements of study you might picture the process of studying and think about its implications for you. Perhaps you will come up with such questions as:

"What do I expect from studying this subject?"

"What kinds of personal satisfactions could studying bring me?"

"I enjoy reading novels (or articles on politics, or biographies, etc.). Is my interest strong enough to enable me to carry out sustained study in a subject of my choice?'

"Would my relationships with my family or close friends deteriorate if I asked for solitude (and relative quiet) for some hours each week in order to study?"

"Is my work liable to make demands on me that would cause my study to suffer?"

The questions you ask are likely to be different in some respects from those of other people. It might pay you to consider such questions at length, re-reading the DES pre-enrolment material that you have in order to be reasonably certain of your decisions. It is often beneficial, too, to talk about them with someone who listens and understands and can make helpful comments.

There is one question that is often asked by mature-age students: "I didn't study much at school, though I'm really keen to try now. Does this mean I'm not likely to be able to come up to University standards?" The answer is an encouraging one. In recent years, thousands of people all over Australia have demonstrated that maturing in years and in experience has given them the capacity to study successfully and to obtain great enjoyment in doing so.

Studying externally can have its benefits. Many external students who live too far from the St. Lucia campus to visit it regularly consider that they have worthwhile compensations for their relative isolation. When students in the Division of External Studies were asked recently to indicate any aspects

of studying externally that they liked, many said they liked the advantages it gave them in fitting in their study with other commitments, family and work responsibilities and the like. External study relieved them of the need to spend a lot of time in daily travel, and to attend lectures at set times. Related to this was the fact that they were freer to go along at their own pace than they would have been in a lecture class, and DES course outlines provided at the beginning of the semester allowed them to plan how to allocate their time in the light of their special interests. If you enrol externally, you, too, may find that advantages such as these will help to overcome feelings of isolation from the University, other students, lecturers and libraries. Many external students, of course, are able to visit a University Centre from time to time or to attend a DES Study School with its opportunities for discussions and lecture attendance.

Study as an activity

If you enrol in a DES course, you will find that it will encourage you to be an active searcher for, and user of, knowledge. Study is a creative process. As a study reader you will employ your ability to make inferences and relate facts to one another as you read, and to evaluate these in terms of what you know and what the writer is saying. In other study activities you may solve problems, state arguments, draw conclusions. Or you will construct essays, plan, carry out and evaluate exercises, make calculations and so on. Through these activities, you will gain a grasp of the subjects you are studying, and form sound judgments in these areas. Practice at these activities will enable you to evaluate better what you read, and to extend your knowledge further by self-directed efforts.

At the beginning of new activities it can be difficult to organise your activities effectively so that things go smoothly and you feel in control. And so with study. Often the first few weeks when you are finding what it is all about, getting to know where to concentrate your efforts and settling into a routine, are the hardest. That is the time when you may need patience, persistence and faith in yourself. Possibly, during that period you might wish to contact the Studies Counsellor or a lecturer about queries that arise.

The costs of external study

Because undergraduate students do not pay tuition fees, the expenses involved in studying a subject or two each semester can be kept relatively low. These are very approximate estimates of typical costs:

Books	:	Up to $30-$50 per subject
Postage	:	Up to $20
Stationery	:	Up to $5

A part-time external student who lives in the Brisbane Metropolitan area is required to pay a Student Service fee ($50 per year in 1981). This provides for membership of the University of Queensland Union, and access to Union services and facilities.

If you live some distance from one of the University Centres (see Study At Home) but elect to attend tutorials there, travel costs will be involved.

If you attend an Orientation Programme in January at St. Lucia, travel costs may also be involved. The residence fee (if you stay in a residential college)is about $20 per day for full board.

If you attend the DES Study School at St. Lucia in July there may again be travel costs. Residence costs are as above.

Thinking about your first subjects

Probably you already have some idea, however vague, of the sorts of subjects in which you would like to enrol if you gain admission to a University course. The subjects available for external study are listed in the leaflet Study At Home. If you wish to study in order to gain an occupational qualification, you might well plan to begin with one of the central subjects of the course (for example, an Accounting subject if you were enrolling in the Bachelor of Commerce course). If your intention is to study for general education, your range of choice of initial subjects could be quite wide. To increase the likelihood of being successful in your first enrolment, you might choose a subject (or subjects, if you have a great deal of spare time) in which you already have some background knowledge, or which you are very keen to learn about. Initial knowledge and strong motivation to study a given subject can do a lot to make for a successful and enjoyable semester.

If you live in the vicinity of any of the University Centres listed in Study At Home, you could arrange to call at the Centre to consult the External Studies Handbook, to survey textbooks held there for any subject you may be particularly interested in, and to discuss your plans.

The fullest statement of information about the rules to be followed in the University's bachelor degree courses and about the subjects available is contained in the Undergraduate Degree Handbook, obtainable from the Manager, University Bookshop, University of Queensland, St. Lucia, Q. 4067. The updated Undergraduate Degree Handbook is usually available in mid-November. Its price in 1981 was $5. Airmail postage within Queensland cost $4.45, while postage by surface mail varied between $1.20 and $3.30 according to distance. If you are reasonably confident that your QTAC application for entry to a University course will be successful, you would be well advised to order a 1982 edition in November. Otherwise, you may find there is all too little time between the date when you receive an offer of a place in a course at the University and the due date for deciding firmly on your first subject or subjects and returning your completed Enrolment Form to the University.

Possibly you may be able to consult an Undergraduate Degree Handbook in a secondary school library or a Public Library, as well as in one of the University Centres; or perhaps a friend may have one you could borrow.

If you would like to read information on careers associated with particular University studies, you can obtain it free of charge, by writing to The Careers Information Officer, Counselling Services, University of Queensland, St. Lucia, Qld. 4067.

How much study is enough?

If you are considering a course of study with DES, you are thinking about something that will take up a sizeable amount of your time regularly each week (perhaps about ten hours, or twenty hours if you later on take a fuller load) for about thirty weeks in the year. How long have you been spending each week on TV, on light reading, on a hobby, or on training for and playing in a team game, or on other things that you like to do or feel you must do? Do you wish to commit yourself to academic activities as a regular undertaking, fitting them into your other activities, making them very much part of your life? Can you

give up (or get freedom from) some of your other activities every week so that your study can be effective?

External and evening students who have established a record of successful study usually regard subjects worth 20 credit points in a given semester* as a full load. This is just half the study load carried by most full-time students in Arts or Commerce-Economics. (At the University of Queensland there is a rough correspondence between credit points and the number of hours per week of involvement in academic activities expected of a student, so "#20" implies about 20 hours of study (reading, note-taking, writing essays, lectures and tutorials, etc.) per week. The maximum for which an external student can enrol in a given year is 60 credit points - but you would need to be very free of other demands on your time and well settled into study in order to carry such a load successfully.

A part-time degree course usually takes at least four years, but typically six or more years to complete. You may be tempted to think this so long a time that you should start off with at least 20 credit points in your first semester. But many people who have outside demands on their time and who are new to university study find it pays to start with one subject worth #10 or even #5 in the first semester (or #20 if it is a year subject). This gives them time to adapt to their new activity, makes it more likely that they will achieve good exam results, allows them to deal with unforeseen demands on their time without putting their study in jeopardy, and gives them more time to enjoy studying - which is very important.

It is really important to plan your entry to university study so that in your first semester you have the experience of success, not of failure. If you accept this view, set yourself a reasonable objective in the beginning - you may complete the course sooner in the long run!

Other avenues

If after reading through the DES pre-enrolment information you feel that the amount of time required for university study might be more than you could give, you might find it worthwhile to enquire about other types of study, where courses are perhaps shorter or devoted to different subjects, or not so demanding of time and effort. Queensland Tertiary Courses, obtainable from QTAC, lists all bachelor degree and tertiary diploma and

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* A semester is an academic half-year. It comprises 13 or 14 weeks of tuition, plus a one- or two-week mid-semester break and a final revision period (or swot vac) of one week, most of the semester examinations being held in the following two or three weeks.

certificate courses available in Queensland, and provides summaries of the qualifications for entry to the courses. Any College of Technical And Further Education will provide information on courses in the TAFE area, including the hobby and interest courses in its Adult Education stream. (There is also a wide variety of Adult Education courses offered by school Parents and Citizens Committees.) These courses, with the exception of the Adult Education courses, can be used for entry to employment.

If, however, you are keen to take up a University course but feel the need of more preparation before doing so, why not study one or more relevant Senior subjects by correspondence? The address of the Secondary Correspondence School is 405 Montague Road, West End, Q. 4101 (Phone (07) 44 0755). Many people find that doing this allows them to get back into the way of study, improving their study skills, giving them an additional basis of knowledge upon which to undertake a university course, and providing them with an interesting task and the satisfaction of achievement,during the process.

Appendix v

AN ORIENTATION PROGRAMME AT ST. LUCIA

FOR NEW EXTERNAL STUDENTS

It is likely that a small number of new external students would attend a two-day orientation programme at St. Lucia in January if this were offered. Some might be metropolitan students, and others non-metropolitan students holidaying locally or visiting Brisbane for the orientation.

The programme might be timed to occur just before the closing date for enrolments (mid-January), provided that arrangements could be made for a suitable statement to this effect to be inserted in the Enrolment Guide (and also to accompany the form, Application For External Status).

An outline of a possible Orientation Programme follows. Further possible development of this topic would await a decision as to whether DES should indeed offer such a programme.

Orientation Programme

Day 1

9:30-10	Welcome to the University (Vice-Chancellor, chaired by Director, DES)
10:05-10:40	Meet other enrolling students. Discussion of objectives and expectations (Studies Counsellor)
10:40-11	Morning tea
11:05-11:45	DES services, procedures and staff (Director, DES)
11:55-12:50	Course planning (Studies Counsellor)
1-2	Lunch
2:05-2:55	Thatcher Library (Thatcher Librarian)
3:05-3:45	Talks by representatives of the University of Queensland Union
3:45	Afternoon tea (DES staff representatives present)
4:30	Informal campus tour
Evening	Social function

Day 2

9.30-10.25	Study methods workshop: reading and note-taking (Studies Counsellor)
10.30-10.45	Morning tea
10.50-11.45	Study methods discussion. creative study, time management (Studies Counsellor)
11.55-12.45	Individual or small group discussions of course objectives and requirements (DES staff representatives)
1.00-2.00	Lunch
2.05-2.55	Group discussion: questions, problems (DES staff representatives, continuing students, Studies Counsellor)
3.05-3.30	Final individual review of enrolments with DES staff representatives
3.35-3.55	Evaluation (Studies Counsellor)
4.00	Afternoon tea (DES staff representatives and Studies Counsellor present)

Appendix vi

INFORMATION TO ACCOMPANY THE FIRST MAILING OF COURSE MATERIAL TO NEW EXTERNAL STUDENTS

A A message from the Studies Counsellor

B Notes on some aspects of studying

A

BEGINNING AS AN EXTERNAL STUDENT

A message from DES Studies Counsellor, Henry Brown

Your receipt of the accompanying material indicates that your enrolment as an external student has been completed. Throughout this and succeeding semesters I may be able to help you with such things as course planning, dealing with academic and related difficulties, developing efficient approaches to study and generally getting the most out of your enrolment as an external student. Please do contact me in relation to any questions or problems that you think a studies counsellor should be able to deal with. I will respond as quickly as I can, and if unable to help you directly will try to find someone who can. If acting on your behalf requires that I interact with other people, I will treat as confidential anything you ask me to. My phone number at DES is (07) . If I am not available when you call please leave a message for me. I can return your call if you are in the metropolitan area or write to you if you live further afield. Between 4:55 p.m. and 9 a.m. the DES Ansafone number is (07) 377 2207. If you intend to visit St. Lucia to see me, a phone call would make sure I am available at the time when you come.

I hope to meet many external students either at St. Lucia or elsewhere in Queensland this year. During the year I will also liaise with academic and administrative staff, and with the University of Queensland Counselling Services whose assistance is, given the limitations imposed by distance, available to external students as it is to other students.

The most drastic academic step you might think of taking during the year is to give up your studies. If you are thinking of discontinuing your course you would be well advised to contact someone in DES about it first. Naturally, I will do all I can to help in this sort of situation, if asked.

If you have not already obtained the textbooks you will need this semester it would be a good idea to order them as soon as possible. The amount of time it is likely to take to get them will depend very much upon where you live. Though stocks of textbooks are usually good, it is especially important for

external students not to risk missing out by ordering too late. (People who have spent some time as external students often get into the habit of finding out during the latter part of the semester what textbooks are needed for the subjects they intend to take in the next semester and then buying these, new or second-hand, or borrowing them, well before the commencement of the next semester.)

The introductory outlines or guides to courses that you now have may tell you of assignments that are due on certain dates later in the semester, and give lists of reference books available from the Thatcher Library. If you leave it until late in the semester to request books from Thatcher you may find that all copies of something you need are out on loan. As with textbook purchases, it is best to order early some at least of the books you wish to consult for your assignment. Read and make summaries of relevant sections, and return the books. You will then be well prepared when the time comes to write your assignment.

With this note are some thoughts on four aspects of a student's task: time management, study reading, creative study, and assignment writing. You may find something to interest you in them. I chose these topics because it seems to me that anyone who can develop his or her own strategies in these four areas will be well prepared for dealing with other questions about how best to study. If you would like to receive comparable material on other aspects of studying or have any other questions, please write or phone.

The fact that DES has a studies counsellor does not mean that its other staff members are unwilling to help you if you ask. They are justifiably proud of their record in this regard, so you are very far from being entirely on your own as a student.

I hope your studies this year will be satisfying and successful.

Henry Brown

B

MANAGING YOUR TIME

Efficient time-management necessarily involves the careful assigning of priorities to one's activities (whether work, recreational, family, social, etc.) followed by the allocation of time to activities in accordance with their priorities. In addition, provision is made for the more important activities to be carried out, as far as possible, under whatever conditions are most favourable to their success.

Many external students, however, find it difficult to get adequate time for the studies they undertake. They may have heavy work commitments, and unavoidable domestic tasks and other family responsibilities. They may be involved in community activities. They may be subjected to unexpected and sustained demands on their time. In some cases family members may be reluctant to acknowledge that a student needs time and relative quiet for study. Again, some family members may not find it easy to accept that some domestic tasks can in fact be given little attention during semester or that they themselves should be asked for assistance in carrying out such tasks.

Whether or not you have the freedom to determine a desired set of priorities and adhere to it, you will regularly make decisions as to what to do at particular times in your week. If you find it difficult to get adequate time for study it is all the more important that the time you do have for that purpose is put to best use. The following hints may help you in getting the most from your time.

> Find those times in the day and in the week when you concentrate best, and try to save these for the most demanding parts of your study. Carry out more routine study activities at other times. Sometimes, the more routine aspects can occupy a brief "warming up" period prior to your moving on to something more difficult.
>
> As far as possible, give each subject an amount of time consistent with the size of the subject and the degree of difficulty it presents to you. A caution must be sounded here, however. It is not advisable to develop the habit of sitting for specified hours at a table merely going through the motions of study without concentration and mental activity, or while carrying out low-grade fringe activities. Set yourself attainment goals, e.g., "I'll stay here until I finish working out this section of my assignment" rather than time-passing

goals which might imply "My conscience will be clear if I stay here for two hours quite apart from consideration of the quality of the study I do."

Keep looking ahead. Plan to use such occasions as some of the public holidays for important projects, for example, to carry out a substantial revision. But in addition, cancelled tutorials, occasions when you are unexpectedly relieved of family responsibilities, and the like can be used for brief intensive study sessions.

Occasionally look backwards. Review the amounts of time you have given to your studies and to other activities in the recent past. This may indicate needed adjustments to your programme.

Put on your table or notice board a list of priority things to attend to. Add to, and cross off from, the list as necessary.

Intersperse rest pauses between study periods, and take time for relaxation or a change of activities over longer intervals.

Try to allocate to every subject (or every section of a subject) the proportion of your study time that it really deserves, whether or not it is a "favourite" subject. If there is something you find hard or do not take to, it is fatally easy to get into the habit of skimping the time you give it, thus making it all the more difficult and less attractive the next time. Especially at the commencement of a semester it helps to give a hard section more time than it needs and to master it, making it easier to deal with in future.

Most of us live, work and play with other people. Managing your time means managing your interactions with others. Talk with those closest to you about your need to control your time. Ask them to help you to get the time you need for study. Tell friends that you must adhere to a study programme, so that they will understand it if you can not spend as much time with them as they might hope. There

if often an additional benefit to be gained from taking these actions: the fact that you tell others how important you consider your study to be may increase your resolve to do it well.

Be prepared to suspend your schedule occasionally in order to give yourself an extended period of time to devote to a lengthy project, e.g., a large assignment.

Be ruthless with low priority activities. Ask yourself, "Is it really necessary for me to mow the lawn this week, write that letter, read all the newspaper..." and so on. Evade as many of these activities as you can. Instead, give your time to your more important activities and see that they are carried out.

Settling to work as an aspect of time-management

Most people at times find it difficult to tackle some of their more demanding activities. It is much easier to take on lesser activities, but time can too easily be wasted on things that are not really important. The more demanding activities call for energy, concentration and perseverance before we experience the payoffs, the satisfactions of something well done. It is essential to have faith in oneself, to be patient and to keep trying at demanding activities, rather than marking up success on lots of easier (and perhaps peripheral) activities.

A frequent comment among students discussing their study difficulties is that they find it hard to get started on study. Some specific aids to getting started are:

Remind yourself of the benefits you will derive from carrying out the study. The benefits can not come if you have not made a beginning on the work. Place in a prominent position a list of all the benefits your study will bring.

Place reminders of the task and materials for commencing it where you will see them.

Find places which are most conducive to your study, and use them.

Find one aspect of the study task that you feel capable of making some headway with and start on that.

Have a brief change - to something relaxing, to some other work, to different surroundings.

Remember that the act of beginning an activity increases your chances of completing it. Each achievement along the way builds confidence in your ability to see it through. Make the start, and in a little while the satisfactions will begin to come. Give yourself a pat on the back for each achievement that you make along the way.

As time goes on, you may well devise your own special methods to aid you in getting started.

Manage your time well and you will find you have more time than you thought!

STUDY READING

This is a note for people who wish to improve their study reading but are not in a position to attend scheduled effective reading classes.

Become a student in almost any university subject, and you become a professional reader. Because reading is one of the principal avenues through which you acquire information, it will benefit you in many ways to read as efficiently as you can. Efficient study reading occurs when you:

read with concentration and an active mind

read to discover, evaluate and use the ideas which are conveyed in words

read at a rate which is suited to your purpose and to the nature of the material you are reading

make use of a systematic reading procedure.

Efficient reading is usually relatively rapid reading. Slow readers too often are not concentrating, are reading word by word rather than phrase by phrase, are not zeroing in on the meaning of what they read. At the other extreme, there is not much value in "reading" at such incredible speeds that your comprehension of what you read falls away. You may have heard of the remark attributed to Woody Allen: "I took a speed reading course. Great. Learned to read right down the middle of the page. I read 'War and Peace' in twenty minutes. It's about Russia."

Most of us can make ourselves read more intently and more rapidly if we determine to do so. Try this: Find how long it takes you to read, say, four pages of a novel, reading at your normal speed. Then time another four pages, now reading with the intention of pushing yourself along while still actively seizing upon the facts. Do this a few times. Many people can in this way demonstrate to their own satisfaction that heightened concentration and a determination not to waste time in reading can improve their reading performance.

By continuing to read with concentration and with determination to deal with facts and with meaning rather than mere words, you can probably get much more from your study reading and in less time. Of course, if you attend an improved reading class conducted by a competent instructor you may do even better. But you can still do much to help yourself while working alone. Put on your notice board or on your desk, a reminder to read actively and with intent, without waste of time while reading.

You're a person who reads sentences over and over again without understanding them, and this slows down your study reading? Then relax, you've got a lot of company. Any of us can do this when we are preoccupied with something else, or tired, or otherwise not concentrating well, but in addition many people do not realize that frequently the trouble is that the full meaning of those incomprehensible sentences can not be discerned until the whole paragraph in which they occur has been read. And similarly, a difficult paragraph can depend for its full meaning upon the paragraph or two that go with it. We acquire information and understanding progressively as we read, but we are at the same time continually "updating" information we have acquired a little earlier. If you are tempted to make regressions while reading, try to have faith in your own capacity to understand what at first is unclear if you will only allow yourself to read the whole of its context as well as the specific sentence or two. Try to build up confidence in your ability to do this. Do not let yourself regress unless you at least read to the end of the paragraph in which you are having trouble.

This leads to the next point. We can assimilate material most effectively if we have a preliminary general idea of what it is about and how its parts are integrated. For this reason it is important to make a preliminary survey of any substantial material that you intend to study. If it is a book, actively read the introductory section including the table of contents, and then leaf through the book, skim reading chapter and section headings and any chapter summaries. (Often the first paragraph or two of a chapter explains what the chapter is to be about, while the last paragraph or two provide a review. And in relation to a book itself, the first and the last chapters may have similar functions.) Before you study each chapter, make a chapter survey. If your reading matter is not a book but a journal article, survey it by skim reading it in the same way. If it commences with an abstract, read the abstract as well as section headings and graphs. You may benefit from picking out some paragraphs to read quickly, as well as any discussion at the conclusion.

Skim reading during surveying is done rapidly (but not carelessly). The later, more detailed reading is of necessity slower. It is a mistake to regard the survey reading as a slight preliminary and the more lengthy reading as "the real thing". Both are essential parts of effective study reading.

Try to make surveying before detailed reading a way of life. Why not practise it also when you read the newspaper? After you have read a news item close your eyes and see how much of it you can recall!

Study reading that you do will always be part of a larger undertaking, for example, to write an essay, to acquire a sound

knowledge of a topic, to flesh out something covered in a lecture. Your activity will therefore not cease when you have carried out a survey followed by a more detailed reading. A time-honoured reading system, SQ3R, can help you to maximise the payoff from your reading activities.

S is the survey

Q indicates explicit questions you can put to yourself after the survey in order to give your reading a purpose. (At tertiary level, many readers are inclined to combine S and Q in one operation to their own advantage. That is to say, they survey questioningly. Their skim reading is in fact an enquiry from which they get information, suggestions, answers - and further questions to be answered in the longer reading.)

R is the Read stage. Here the search is for facts and ideas and their relationships, and the approach is active and critical. If you wish, read twice, taking notes on the second occasion, or underlining and annotating the book if it is your own. If what you are reading is a book, deal with a chapter at a time. (Note: As a student, your reading of a book at this stage will typically be limited to those sections which are relevant to your particular quest at the time.)

R is recall. Test your knowledge quickly by jotting down from memory the key points and implications, or representing diagrammatically the essence of the section or chapter. This is an important activity, and time saving in the long run. It calls for an active mind as you recreate a body of knowledge. It lets you know how much mastery you have of what you are working on, and your awareness that the recall session is part of your reading system will probably put pressure on you to read actively, not passively.

R finally indicates review. If something is important enough to spend precious time reading it, it also merits review in order to keep it fresh in your mind, and review may be needed on more than one occasion in a semester or a year. The most effective kind of review? The trial-recall method described under Recall, supplemented by the brushing up of areas where your recall proves to be imperfect.

STUDYING CREATIVELY

Every student has the capacity to be mentally creative and the work of a student comprises activities which require, and nurture, creativity. A student puzzling over a mathematics problem or an assignment in one of the social sciences is exercising creativity. True, his or her work may not be as innovative as some that the professor spends time on, and true, tens of thousands of people may have solved the same problem in the past. But equally true is the fact that in the experience of our student, something new is being evolved as he or she works towards solution of the problem. This is a form of mental creativity just as is the work of the professor. Again, taking a lecture (or attending a tutorial) effectively, requires that you do some preparatory thinking or discussion (even a little, as you walk to the tutorial room), that while hearing the lecture you question what the lecturer is saying, mentally go ahead by making inferences, retrace the paths of the argument, perceive relationships between what is being said and what you know already, draw conclusions, make assessments, and decide what are the essential things to write down. In sum, that you truly participate in the lecture in a creative way.

Your studies, then, will give you an opportunity to exercise your creativity - will in fact demand your creativity, will help to enhance your creativity.

When you study creatively you study actively, questioningly, looking for insight rather than simply to memorise by rote; striving for overviews, making inferences, constructing viewpoints and arguments. Creative study is the very essence of student activity. Assignments, for example, are intended to enhance and to test creative ability, and university examinations invariably involve a significant component calling for creative thinking.

How Can You Enhance The Level Of Your Creativity In Your Studying?

Using your imagination is an important process in studying most subjects. It enables you to enlarge your concepts of what you are studying, to relate its central characteristics to other phenomena, to speculate on new possibilities. Some examples:

searching to understand the motives and outlooks of individual leaders (and followers) of social movements, writers of literature, planners, theorists

imagining the practical effects of theories (economic, psychological, etc.) in relation to particular populations and countries

visualising structures and procedures in, for example, geography and biological and physical sciences and in relation to drama, linguistics, psychology, education, government

searching for examples to illustrate principles you encounter

"brainstorming" - in a relaxed atmosphere writing down or talking onto tape all ideas that come into your mind concerning a problem, including fanciful ideas, and subsequently examining these ideas for new and useful leads.

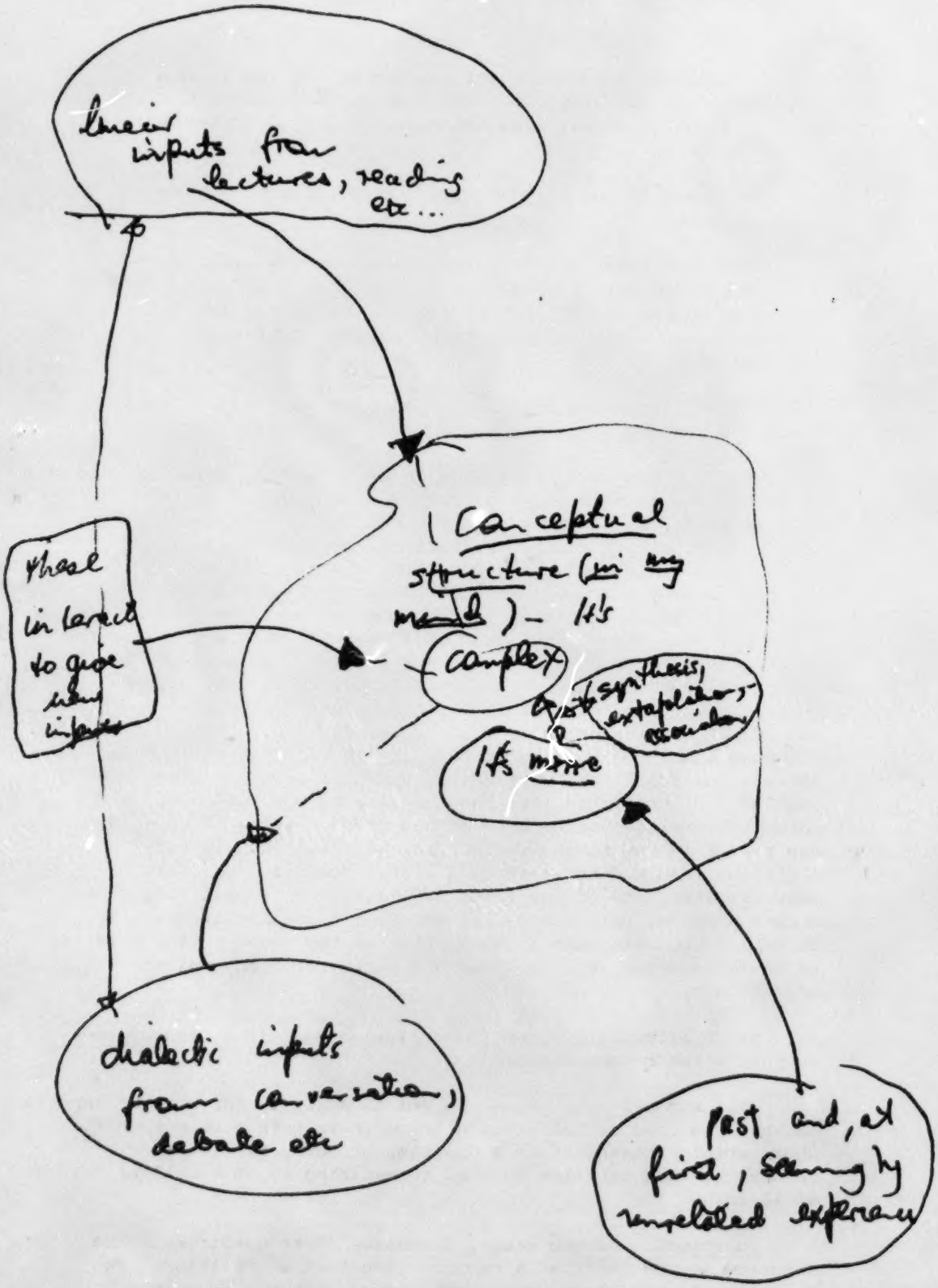
You will no doubt be able to think of a variety of ways in which you can use visualization in your particular subject(s).

Draw and diagram. This ties in with imagining, visualising. It allows you to illustrate structure, causation, temporal relationships, and inferences - the variety is only limited by the degree to which you are prepared to use imagination. Buy some coloured pens and cheap paper (or a small wall board, if you prefer) and use your ability to conceptualize as you draw. Your visual arrangements of information can lead you to new insights, demonstrate the logic of a subject, help you to remember information. Tony Buzan pointed out in his stimulating book "Use Your Head" (London, BBC Publications, 1974) that perhaps because speech and writing employ a series of symbols extended bit by bit in time or in space, people too readily assume that the mind works in a linear manner, adding information much in the way one adds items to a list. But knowledge as it is acquired is integrated into the totality of our knowledge, and perceiving relationships between new and old items of knowledge can result in our making further inferences. This is very different from adding items on a list. Buzan's book contains many illustrations of the value of diagrams in summarising what a person knows. His advice for avoiding list-like diagrams is to depict the main idea in the centre of the page, moving outwards as you depict the related ideas and their relationships to one another.

As an illustration, on the following page is a diagram made at this point by one reader.

Make summaries. Here you search actively for what is important in what you read or hear, integrating it to form a comprehensive short written statement or a diagram, or both, for future reference. The creative work of summarising is an excellent way of learning.

Questions. As you study, formulate short questions to be answered by you later as a constructive form of revision. And from time to time test your knowledge of what you have been


linear inputs from lectures, reading etc ...
theoretical inferences to guide future inferences
conceptual structure (in my mind) - it's complex
it's synthesis, extrapolation, association
it's intuitive
dialectic inputs from conversation, debate etc
past and, at first, seemingly unrelated experience

learning by putting your books aside and making a diagram of, or jotting down notes on, what you have been studying so that you can verify that your learning has been effective. Note that in these trial recalls you are actively recreating what you have learnt. If you can, occasionally discuss your work with a fellow student, present short quizzes or problems (not too easy, not outrageously hard) to one another and go through the results.

Solving problems, writing assignments, designing. Take every opportunity you can to engage in these creative activities, which essentially involve researching facts, perceiving the important aspects of a question and bringing them together in the focus of your attention, exploring their relationships, making inferences, and deriving conclusions. As well as developing the specific insights and understandings involved in your problem you will be enlarging your knowledge and building up skills which are applicable to other problems in different areas.

Making use of your knowledge in everyday life. If you are studying English drama, analyse some of the presentations you see on T.V. or stage; if economics, government, law, history, etc., critically evaluate newspaper items and commentaries. You may be surprised at the number of ways you can find to apply your knowledge. Demonstrate to yourself the value of your developing ability in your daily life.

You will not be able to solve a problem or complete an assignment by sitting panic-stricken, telling yourself "I don't know what to do". No one knows what to do to solve a new problem until they make some sort of start on it. If you do not know where to start, you can diagram what is given, do some brainstorming, pick up any aspect of the problem and try to develop something from that. Review anything in your notes or textbook that may be relevant to the problem, and try to extend your thinking from there to the problem in hand. If necessary seek initial guidance from your tutor or lecturer. Try working backwards: "If I need to demonstrate X, what do I need to prove or to verify in order to do so? And to establish those things, what conditions must be satisfied?...." And so on, finally arriving at logical steps you may need to go through in proceeding from the starting point to your conclusions.

When revising, do this actively also. Rather than merely reading over something, supplement reading by trial recalls in diagrammatic or written summary form, by re-working mathematical problems, etc.

PREPARING A WRITTEN ESSAY ASSIGNMENT

Sometimes students complain that too much of their time is spent on preparing assignments, leaving them too little time for study! But the creative activity of researching and writing an assignment is the very essence of study, involving as it does the search for and acquisition of knowledge and understanding, and the use of that knowledge and understanding in creative ways. Developing skills of this sort is developing competence as a student. An accomplished student is capable of applying techniques and strategies of discovery to questions which are new to his or her experience, evolving and setting down answers, analyses or relevant proposals.

This note is intended mainly as an aid for new students in the humanities and the social sciences. Teaching staff who require essays to be written may give detailed information about the standards to which they expect assignments to adhere, and frequently will give advice on procedures for assignment writing. Their requirements should, of course, be met, and the specific advice they may give about researching and writing in their disciplines should take precedence over the general advice given here.

Occasionally people worry about the level at which they are to write, or, in other words, how much knowledge the lecturer or examiner expects them to assume, without going into explanations about it. Do you need to explain or prove the basics in an assignment, or can they be taken for granted? A reasonable view to take is that you are writing the essay or report to be read by an intelligent person who has sound knowledge in the subject for which you are enrolled and who wishes to read an exposition on the specific topic upon which you are writing.

Organization is the key to effective writing. To organize your thinking when submitting written essay assignments there are certain clearly defined steps you should follow.

Think About The Assignment

Determine what the question and title requires you to do. Examine the precise wording. Ask yourself "What exactly is being demanded of me?" You should be aware of the differences between commonly used words, for example:-

Compare: examine the characteristics of the objects in question with a view to demonstrating their similarities and their differences.

Contrast: examine the characteristics of the objects in question for the purpose of demonstrating differences.

Analyse: consider the various components of the whole and describe the inter-relationships between them, indicating why they are important.

Discuss: present the different aspects of a question or problem, paying special attention to organization.

Examine critically: act as a judge or critic, appraise.

Evaluate: appraise something indicating the degree to which it can be justified, or its value for application. (Opinions expressed must be informed opinions).

Summarize: examine the main points briefly.

Many difficulties in writing an essay arise because students have not really thought about what the essay requires of them.

Starting Your Reading

Typically, you will have at least a general idea of the background of your assigned topic and will be able to commence reading directly in the topic area. Lacking this background, it is usually helpful briefly to read round the topic to give yourself a reference framework. To get results you must read purposefully. Keep in mind the precise question you are trying to answer and read to answer this question. The more clearly you know what you are looking for the more effectively you will read.

It is normally not enough to read only one or two references on your reading list. You may end up as an expert on these particular authors but without wider reading you may not have the breadth of knowledge necessary to evaluate and put their particular themes into perspective. Most books need not be read from cover to cover with equally deep concentration throughout - be selective about what you choose to read and you will be able to increase your coverage without necessarily increasing your reading time. Skim-reading will help you to decide what sections require more detailed reading. (Note that some lecturers provide lengthy reading lists without expecting students to consult all of the references they have given.)

Keep A File Of Your Reading References

It can be very helpful to make out a separate card for each book and journal article on your reading list. Standard filing cards are available from most bookshops and stationery shops - the size you choose will depend on whether or not you use your card for your note-taking as well as for listing bibliographical details.

Sample bibliography card for a book:-

PAHL, Raymond Edward
Patterns of Urban Life.
London. Longmans, 1970.

and for a journal article:-

WEISS, J.M.
Psychological factors in Stress & Disease.
Scientific American, 1972, Vol. 226, pp 104-113.

The great advantage of a card file is its flexibility.

Record on each card the appropriate classification number and location of the item: cards can then be arranged by the physical location of the references they contain. This can prevent wasting time by running from one library to the other consulting only one reference at a time.

Cards can be arranged by subject. After reading, subject headings can be allocated to each card. You can later arrange the cards into the order in which you plan to treat each topic. Using your cards in this way is a very helpful first step when you come to the stage of preparing an outline for your essay.

Cards can be arranged alphabetically by author. This will provide an instant bibliography when required.

No doubt you will think of other arrangements for your cards, but hopefully these examples will persuade to give a card file a try if you have not already used this system.

Note-Taking

Take notes on relevant information in books and journal articles. As you read and think, you will probably develop some guiding ideas, insights or questions that go beyond what you are reading and are worth noting as possibly important guides for the later stages of your reading and for your writing. Two important points to keep in mind about the kind of notes that one takes in library research for the presentation of a paper are:-

You do not know exactly how much of your reading you will eventually use until you have finished reading almost all your library research materials.

You do not know, as you read, just how you will organize your paper. This only begins to emerge when you are close to finishing your reading.

These two points have an important implication: they require that you be able to organize and reorganize your notes in any sequence that suits your purpose. Filing cards will give you this flexibility. By using a large size card you can keep on the one card not only the bibliographical details but also your research notes on each book and journal article consulted. If you feel this would be too restrictive in terms of space, use a separate sheet of loose-leaf paper for your notes on each item. Write a subject heading on each of your notes.

If you cannot get your separate notes down on a sheet or two of paper, start asking yourself if you have been taking notes to answer the precise question set or just note-taking at random as a substitute for thinking about the material. Note-taking may give you a sense of security but it is a false sense of security unless your notes are good notes. Good notes are precise and relevant and are taken only after you have read your material, understood it and assessed its contribution to the general topic.

Integrating your information and your ideas

As you have been going through the reading and note-taking stage, you will have had the experience of making discoveries - not merely discoveries of facts, but insights, relational discoveries resulting from your grasping the implications of sets of facts. Your notes on these discoveries will have important contributions to make to your assignment.

More searching for insights occurs during the integration stage as you work towards a coherent and logical exposition of your findings. You will be looking for the direction(s) that your argument should take, and for its separate components. Assuming that you have assigned tentative subject headings to your notes, you could now sort the notes into piles, each of which contains information on a topic you consider to be important. Next, consider your topic areas and their contents. You may find that some of the notes really are not needed: some may overlap, some may deal with matter that does not fit in with your report as it is shaping up. Discard notes as you see fit. (You may become aware that you have failed to deal with some important phase of a subject that ought to be taken up. If so, do some more reading in the relevant topic area.) As you work, formulate an outline of your assignment: it can be in words, or essentially in the form of a diagram.

(At this stage some people find it helpful to rearrange the original card file by subject. Make out a separate sheet of paper for each major topic, and under each topic list all the relevant references. When you come to write on each topic this will provide you with an index to the appropriate notes.)

The organisation phase is of great importance. It calls for an integrative process in which your intent is to see in

relief the main themes of the material you have been dealing with, and to plan for your ultimate presentation of a comprehensive and systematic argument.

Making your outline more explicit

Revising the outline is the next step in organizing your thoughts. Decide on the two, three or more principal topics that you want to use in developing your line of argument. Depending on how complicated your paper is, you may decide to carry your outline out to third- and fourth-order headings. You may wish to indicate the facts of your outline in traditional form, for example:

> List in order the topics you intend to write about, describing each as briefly and simply as you can.
>
> In front of each topic place a number or letter to show the rank of each point
>
> > for main topics use Roman numerals (I, II, III, etc.)
> > for sub-topics use Arabic numbers (1, 2, 3, etc.)
> > for sub-sub topics use small letters (a, b, c, etc.)

Give each rank a separate margin, indenting each subordinate rank under each superior one:

I

1

a

One basic outline framework is:

Introduction

> Comment on the subject of the essay. (What do you understand by it? How is it important? etc.)
>
> Introduce the points you are going to discuss, first stating your case in general terms: the opinion you are going to support in the rest of the essay.
>
> Very briefly summarize the overall theme of your essay, indicating the points to be made and perhaps the order in which they are to be presented. This gives your reader an idea of what to expect and greatly increases his or her comprehension. Do not waste your own and your readers' time with padding.

The main body

> Develop your line of argument through its main ideas - as many as necessary.
>
> Support each idea with examples and illustrations drawn from the books, articles and any other sources you have used.

Conclusion

Summarise the main ideas

formulate any tentative answers to initial questions: comment on the topic of the essay, indicating wider implications, future trends, and scope for further consideration.

Start Writing At The End?

Some people find it helpful to take one final step in the planning: they write the last paragraph on their essay first. Doing this forces them to organise their thinking on a topic and, knowing exactly what conclusion they are heading towards, gives a sense of direction to their writing.

The First Draft

Very few people get by with just one version of what they write.

When writing your first draft use your outline as a sort of table of contents for your paper. At this stage you should be more concerned with getting your ideas down somehow than with the best possible wording. Leave plenty of room for correction, e.g., write on every other line. As you write try to integrate your ideas so that your arguments flow rationally and convincingly to your conclusions.

Revising the Paper

If possible, allow a few days to go by between writing your first draft and getting to work on a final version. You will need this time for the pride of authorship to subside so that you can critically read and edit your assignment before rewriting it for submission.

A Check-List

Here is a list of some do's and don'ts to keep in mind:-

Do write on the topic set. The most common fault is writing at length on some irrelevant aspects of the topic.

Avoid making sweeping and unfounded generalisations. Always support your points with fact and references.

Do not borrow material without acknowledgement. Plagiarism is regarded as a form of cheating. Find out the accepted method of referencing from your lecturers.

Use quotations sparingly.

Most essays do not require subtitles. Rely on your topic sentence at the beginning of each paragraph, to indicate content of paragraph.

Limit the assignment to the required length.

In all formal written assignments references should be clearly documented. Book --- author(s), title edition (if not the first), publisher, place of publication, year of publication.
Periodical --- author(s), title, name of journal, volume, year of publication, page number.

The setting-out of the assignment should conform to whatever requirements are set down by your lecturer. Typing is ordinarily preferable to writing. In either case, leave good margins. Keep a carbon or photocopy of your assignment as a safeguard against loss and for your possible future reference. Be sure that the assignment carries your name and any other required identificatory information.

Qualities of Good Essay Writing (Division of External Studies).

Logically well-planned essay with a consistent argument that answers the question asked.

Evidence of wide reading.

Clear, unambiguous writing.

No irrelevant material or "padding".

Evidence of originality in thinking.

Full acknowledgement of sources.

Correct English usage.

Answer within length suggested by lecturer concerned.

Adherence to formal conditions of assignment work.

A well-typed (or written) manuscript, neatly presented.

A FINAL THOUGHT --- START EARLY !!!